

INSIDE TODAY

WORLD NEWS

IRAN SPY



This undated file photo provided Tuesday, March 3, 2009 by the National Press Photographers Association shows U.S. journalist Roxana Saberi. Saberi, a 31-year-old dual American-Iranian citizen, was convicted of spying and sentenced to eight years in prison by an Iranian court Saturday April 18, 2009. See INTERNATIONAL NEWS

SPORTS NEWS

HIGH NOTE



Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant shoots over Utah Jazz guard Ronnie Brewer during the second half of an NBA basketball first-round playoff game in Los Angeles, Sunday, April 19, 2009. The Lakers won 113-99. See Sports Today



Price of a barrel of petroleum today:

US\$ 49.52

Flora's Clown Doctors' Caminata

'Aruba walks for Guinness Book of World Records'



ORANJESTAD

Yesterday, April 19 Aruba joined hands for the Flora's Clown Doctors' Caminata. Ruben Garcia got everyone lined up, wearing their red noses to try and set a record of the Most People Wearing Red Noses during Ten Minutes for the Guinness Book of World Records. The Clown Doctors hope to gain world fame when the video is posted on You-

Tube.

The idea is that everyone who paid the AWG. 10,-- registration fee got a red foam nose. Hundreds of children and adults in rows of fifteen people per row marched down the road together. The idea was to get 1001 participants in which the official numbers will be released tomorrow after a notary and a bailiff release red-nosed results.

During ten minutes participants kept on their noses and were entertained by the emcee, who rehearsed the popular 'Do the Wiper' song with everyone as he introduced a Frozen Moment. During the entire ten minutes and during the Frozen Moment video and photo shots will be the proof for the Guinness Book of Records that a record has been set.



Continued on page 6

Movie Madness for 3D at The Cinemas Aruba

ORAJESTAD - This past weekend was the craziest weekend ever at The Cinemas Aruba. With the introduction of the 3D movies last week, the public of Aruba wanted to go and see their movies in 3D.

Last week in a all out event Setar the national phone company together with The Cinemas Aruba introduced the 3D concept to the Island, Aruba being the only place in the world where all movies are 100% digital.

Continued on page 5



Looking for the legendary seafood entrees?

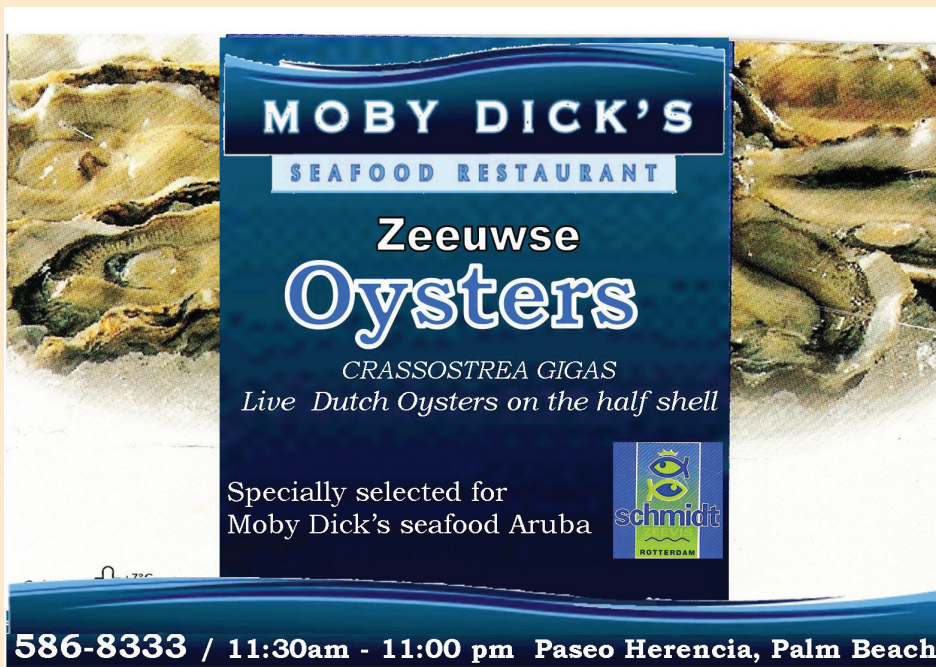
The freshest seafood is at Moby Dick's

Don't spend another day without a bloody oyster

PASEO HERENCIA – Moby Dick's has one mission; to take you to the depths of the blue ocean to taste some of the most exquisite dishes to come from the deep. What a truly beautiful restaurant this is, and what a unique interior to match. The inside is studded with artwork, amazing glass carvings, and both floors are dominated by gigantic fountains, with water running from ceiling to floor along multicoloured lit fibre optic cables. The stairway is lined by an impressive painting which runs along the complete wall. The menu promises to be a true seafood lovers dream. Lobsters, fresh fish fillets, shrimps, Moby Dick's has everything on the menu. There is of course a land lubbers section for those who are so disposed. The wine list is impressive to say the least, and the cocktails are definitely worth a taste. Moby Dick's is open for lunch as well. The chef has made a well rounded, extensive menu for you to choose from. You will find what you want, whatever your

craving may be at that time. The staff is amongst the friendliest on the island, ever so attentive to your every whim. So long story short, for unbelievable seafood in unique surroundings, go to Moby Dick's. You'll have a whale of a time!

Don't leave Aruba without trying the BLOODY OYSTER! It is the ultimate delicacy known by deep sea connoisseurs. This is heavenly combination of Tomato Juice, Cold Vodka, Oysters, Shrimp, Tabasco, Lime and Pepper.



Delivering innovative technology

Geox now open at the Renaissance Mall



ORANJESTAD – Geox Aruba enjoyed a warm reception as it opened at the Renaissance Mall in Oranjestad. The concept shoe store had shoppers knocking on its door even before completing the setup, they were asking to make purchases even before the store-sign was up. The popular Italian brand, enjoys a dedicated following in the USA and Europe, and now also in Aruba. The Geox genesis goes back to the '90s

during a business trip to Reno Nevada to promote the family wine business at a trade fair Italian businessman Mario Polegato decided to go for hike in the mountains. Soon he became irritated by his overheating feet, baking inside his rubber-soled shoes, and in a flash of inspiration the 'shoes that breathe' were born as he punctured holes in the soles to let air in and excess heat escape. Polegato knew from the

beginning that the idea would be revolutionary and that it would change the way people think about their shoes. Polegato went home to Italy and patented the technology according to which outsoles are perforated in the forefoot area where most sweat glands are located. The micro-porous membrane he designed features holes smaller than water molecules, but larger than vapor molecules. The membrane is inserted inside the sole to allow on-going ventilation, preventing water and debris from coming anywhere near feet. The fruit of Polegato's flash inspiration is a comfortable line of footwear especially suited for active feet and for anyone working on his feet, standing, or walking for an extended period of time. The benefits of having Happy Feet is enormous, resulting mostly in a happier facial expression and a general feeling of well-being, which



is especially true for women who often buy shoes based on aesthetics, sacrificing comfort. With Geox, no sacrifices are required, the shoes are beautiful, stylish, well made and durable. Geox, hailing from Italy, has been in the US market since 2004 and enjoys in general great popularity on an international level. To admire the amazing collection for men, women and children, visit the Geox Store at Renaissance Mall; the shoes are blessed by Italian



design and combine style and functionality. Geox Aruba, Renaissance Mall, tel.: 588 6736, Geox@setarnet.aw

Fabulous Palm Beach Plaza set to open in the Summer

PALMBEACH—The Palm Beach Plaza now under construction on the boulevard just below the Marriott Surf Club has been a dream in the making since 2007, when 15,000 m2 of fine dining, shopping and entertainment began construction.

“The complex,” says Mall Manager Alex Otterspeer, “is the largest mall in the Southern Caribbean; it was conceived as an all-day family entertainment center offering an abundance of activities to vacationers and locals, of all ages.”

Created by Landy NV, with managing director Muller Solognier, as a partnership of three well-established local developers, the multi-level mall attracted a great number

of prestigious tenants who are all excited about moving into the heart of Palm Beach, within walking distance to all high-rise resorts.

Renowned jewelry store, Shivas Gold & Gems will occupy an elegant space on the lower level; Benetton, San Marina Shoes, Sunspecs, Tommy Hilfiger and Guess, have all picked their desired setting, as well as The Athlete's Foot, Penha Perfumeries, Panache Swimwear, the Shoe Box and famous Latin designer Jon Sonen, who is opening a stylish concept store for men's fashion, on the second level.

Also on the second level, a luxurious 8 movie theater Mega



Plex, with a state of the art design.

The mall's third level will be home to Aruba's first food court featuring a collection of global cuisine offerings right next to an area entirely dedicated to kids.

The children's entertainment space will feature a Kiddie-Train, a Rock Climbing wall, a Bowling Alley, an electronic game zone and a thrilling Cable Slide, next to an indoor supervised play room.

With their kids entertained parents will be able to enjoy diverse services such as a Day Spa, or a business visit to the Western Union branch or Post-Office location, or even a stroll to the mall's well-stocked Mini-Market.

The restaurants checking into the Palm Beach mall will offer a great range of specialties. Cas Tua is developing an ambitious Mediterranean eatery on the second level, with outdoor and indoor seating, adjacent to the Mega Plex.

Much-loved local eatery La Terazza, will also reinvent itself on that second level with a sky walk, overlooking the green hills of Noord and Alto Vista.

A Miami sushi bar, Hoshi Sushi, as well as Mama Mexico, will tempt shoppers with their creative menus, all with indoor and outdoors dining options.

The unique mall design invites Aruba's famed trade winds in, and the extensive use of glass windows situates the Palm Beach Mall into the local landscape, allowing an open, airy, sense of space that is unconfined and very inviting.

Additionally, the Palm Beach Mall will offer 354 easily accessible, ground level parking spaces, and nicely lit walking lanes to and from the hotel strip.

Indra Stamper, coordinating the promotions for the complex reports that the mix of 60 classy tenants, will deliver the most

variety during extended opening hours, making the Palm Beach Plaza a much-anticipated, premier destinations prepared to serve locals and visitors, by the late Summer.

Ash Ramchandani states on behalf of Landy NV that with a fifty million florin investment the Palm Beach Mall represents the

first phase of development with a hotel, condo and spa property coming next door, on the adjacent 15,000 m2, sometimes in the future, having already began the aesthetic conceptualization of the site plans.

Pictured here the much anticipated Palm Beach Plaza, nearing completion.



MONDAY'S CRAB NIGHT



\$ 34.95 per person + 15% s.c and 3% Gov. tax

Caesar salad with fresh Caribbean shrimp and Mandarin orange slices
The GIANT crab sampler includes Alaskan king crab legs, snow crab legs, fried soft shell crab, stuffed crab back, Maryland crab cake, lemon, Tartar sauce and drawn butter.



Open Daily

Located downtown in the Renaissance Marketplace

Toll free: 1-866-978-5043

Tel: (207) 583-5858 or 582-0184

www.waterfrontaruba.com

E-mail: water@setarnet.aw

In spite of economic downturn

2008 still shows growth in all passenger segments

General Aviation and European Market show largest growth

ORANJESTAD - The number of aircraft movements at AIRB grew by 2.7% compared to 2007 for a total of 36,818. The overview of passenger aircraft, full freighters and general aviation is as follows: Further analysis of the

commercial passenger flights per segment shows the following: The unprecedented spike in crude oil prices called for massive changes in the airline industry during the late spring/summer. Airlines had to modify their business

models while trying to remain in business forcing them to a major round of service cuts in the fall of 2008. US domestic airports estimated capacity cuts between 10% and 15% on average. The following graph illustrates capacity changes

at AIRB from January through September and October through December. Flight reductions in the Caribbean region by especially American Eagle caused severe damage to several smaller islands that relied on Eagle for the

majority of their service. Aruba has been reasonably successful in diversifying air service from the USA in the past, avoiding grim situations when such capacity cuts occur.

A quick look into the development of revenues and expenses for some of our US air service providers indicates a completely different picture compared to just twelve months ago: the industry is shrinking.

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Double Points from 11am - 1pm Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm	WEDNESDAY	Double Points from 12pm - 2pm Prize Give Away from 4pm - 7pm Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm
Double Points from 11am - 1pm Prize Give Away from 4pm - 7pm Free Slot Tournament from 8pm - 10pm Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm	THURSDAY	Double Points from 12pm - 2pm Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm
Double Points from 11am - 1pm Wii Raffle @ 8pm Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm	FRIDAY	Double Points from 12pm - 2pm Wii Raffle @ 9pm Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm
Double Points from 11am - 1pm Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm	SATURDAY	Double Points from 12pm - 2pm Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm
Double Points from 11am - 1pm Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm	SUNDAY	Double Points from 12pm - 2pm Triple Points from 7pm - 9pm

For more information, call: 523-6318 or 523-6437
www.arubacrystalcasinos.com • www.arubaseaportcasinos.com

Yom Hashoa Memorial Service for Holocaust victims

ORANJESTAD - Today, Monday, April 20th, at 7:30PM, the Jewish Community of Aruba will have a Yom HaShoa Memorial Service for Holocaust victims, as part of their yearly commemoration of this tragic event.

Yom HaShoa is the day when Jews all over the world stop their daily activities for a moment to remember and honor the memory of the 6.000.000 of their brothers and sisters killed during the Holocaust, as well as the heroism and courage of the fighters of the Ghettos and the Jewish Partisans.

Visitors to the island are cordially invited to attend this ceremony at Beth Israel Synagogue, Adriaan Lacle Blvd. 2, Oranjestad. For more information please call 582 3272.



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HAVE IT YOUR WAY, RIGHT AWAY!

A tortilla tastefully filled with omelet, bacon*, cheese, hash browns and topped with Smokey Cheese Sauce

*Also available with ham or sausage

Movie Madness for 3D at The Cinemas Aruba



MONDAYS SPECIAL!



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\$3.00 OFF
CATCH OF THE DAY

...FRESH FISH CAUGHT DAILY
BY THE OWNER HIMSELF.

A long tradition of serving the finest
Seafood & Steaks
for over 20 years!



Open daily from 5:00pm - 10:30pm (closed on Tuesdays)
For reservations call: 583-2515 - Klipstraat 12, Downtown.
www.driftwoodaruba.com

* Not valid with any other promotion.

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Last week in a all out event Setar the national phone company together with The Cinemas Aruba introduced the 3D concept to the Island, Aruba being the only place in the world where all movies are 100% digital.

Everyone enjoyed the first 3D movies to be presented which are Monster vs. Alien and Caroline.

Continued from front page



Various local celebrities were present to help out with the registration of participants. Everyone received a snack, a drink and a tee-shirt for this amount. Proceeds go entirely towards the Clown Doctors Foundation

Sponsors of Flora's Clown Doctors Caminata are Romar, Visser, E-Z Party Solutions, Zenitel, Idefre, ProGraphics, Taste of Belgium, Claro and Aruba's Police force. Registration for Flora's Caminata starts at 3 pm on Sunday, April 19 at Flora. The Caminata's time of departure is at 5 pm; the distance is 6 kilometers.



Come and enjoy your Exclusive Gourmet store



WINE, LIQUOR & SPECIALTIES

Le Gourmet situated at the Village in-front of Radisson Hotel is Aruba's finest Wine, Liquor and Specialty store, offering a vast array of the finest wines that you can find from France, Italy, California, Chile, Argentina, New Zealand, Spain, Australia, South Africa, we also offer a great variety of liquors and hard liquors, beers, and special cheeses, chocolates, coffee and much more. Le Gourmet has a comfortable browsing atmosphere and an extremely knowledgeable and friendly staff, we guarantee the best prices on the high rise strip, Le Gourmet is an all-in-one fine beverage and gourmet shopping experience.




Open: Mon-Sat from 2 pm to 10 pm
Sunday from 5pm to 10pm.
Step in and enjoy!

Located right in front of the Radisson Resort at The Village Mall Tel: 5867478
E-mail: legourmet@setarnet.aw Hotel delivery available!



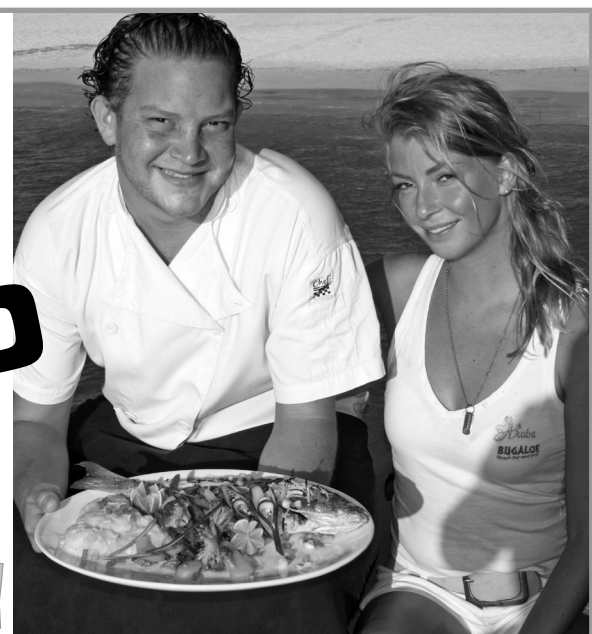
CRAZY FISH MONDAY

18 oz Fish platter \$20

fun
friends
food

**fresh local Snapper or Grouper, vegies and rice
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The French Steakhouse Gets a Seasonal Refresh



Eagle Beach – Locals and visitors have been looking forward to the seasonal menu tweak and recharge of the French Steakhouse, under the expert direction of executive chef George Hoek. The good news reached us just recently. The master has finally revealed his grand retouch, resulting in a packed dining-room every night of the week.

Among appetizers Chef George now lists his popular classics, Escargot a la Pernod and Prosciutto Ham & Melon

next to his novel selections, Authentic Aruba Keeshi Yena and Tropical Crab Cakes with pineapple and mango salsa.

The classic menu of the French Steak House received a pepped-up twist, also evident in the salad section featuring a Honey Glazed Salmon Salad and a Hearts of Palm with Roasted Pepper salad.

The menu now boasts more seafood, from fresh fish to the totally sinful and amazingly decadent Caribbean Stuffed Shrimp with Crabmeat and

Bacon, which became an instant hit. The tequila and sweet chili glaze, lends the Jumbo shrimp a pure taste of heaven! The famous South American Churrasco steak, a signature preparation, now shares the limelight with juicy USDA beef specialties such as NY Sirloin and Filet Mignon. And Chef George definitely took the boring out of chicken with his Jerk Curried Skewers and Lemon Herb Broilers.

Open seven days a week from 5:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. the French Steakhouse is blessed with the nicest staff and a delightfully renovated dining room with sparkling China, crisp linen, an interesting bread basket, colossal desserts and live jazz on piano with Eddy Samson.

Hungry patrons will appreciate the Ambassador's 5-course menu featuring the run of the menu highlights for just \$34.95 per person, at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa, on Eagle beach. □



Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar perfects beach cuisine



Eagle Beach – Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa recently unveiled its new lunch & cocktail menu, conceived and presented by executive chef George Hoek.

A few months ago, when Chef Hoek joined the Manchebo's culinary team, he promised to introduce a "Sun Splashed" menu to the resort's Café & Beach Bar, thus elevating beach cuisine to an ultimate high.

True to his promise, the chef delivered a contemporary menu, listing many favorite dishes from around the world, deriving inspiration off US, Mexican, Thai, Jamaican, Cuban, Greek and Mediterranean menus, all served with a tropical, Caribbean flair.

For starters to Sun-Sational Salads, to open

face sandwiches, Cuban pressed jawbreakers and wraps, Chef Hoek went out of his way to bring novelty to mid-day platters, while not forgetting the classics, which also make an appearance on his menu starring oversize Beef Burgers, Philly Cheese Steak Sandwiches and Hot Dogs.

The Pega Pega tropical & frozen cocktail list, with fresh fruit or ice cream smoothies, daiquiris, coladas and margaritas, leaves nothing out, including Yellow Birds, Sex on the Beach and Mudslides, making a lunch-time brain-freeze, extremely easy to get!

The Pega Pega, one of Aruba oldest beach bars is open on fabulous Eagle Beach, with unrivaled views, caring, gracious service, and relaxed atmosphere, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. The bar opens at 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. □



Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano delivers authentic Italian flavors



Eagle Beach -- Italian food lovers needn't walk far. Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano located within walking distance of all low-rise resorts, at the charming Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa, delivers Mamma Mia cuisine. The Manchebo's Executive Chef George Hoek concocted an irresistible menu of Italian classic specialties with a contemporary feel, served al fresco, on the garden terrace or around the tropical pool.

From Anti Pasti to Insalata, Zuppa to Pesce, the menu welcomes diners with familiar recipes, which distinctly demonstrates the talents of Executive Chef George Hoek, a master of flavorful sauces, delicious combinations and delightful presentations

At the heart of the menu, the Pasta section, delivers a nice variety to be shared by two or enjoyed unabashedly solo – go ahead, you only live once. Pizza appears on Giorgio's menu for

those craving thin crusts and ample toppings, with a selection of classic pies made to order and served with a genuine Italian accent. Angelo, the Maitre D is Italian, naturally.

Giorgio's Piatti Principali feature a hit-parade of dishes, which make it very difficult to choose.

Giorgio's Osso Bucco will have you moaning with great satisfaction as you heap the braised veal shanks flavored with herbs and a red wine reduction, escorted by potato gnocchi, onto your fork, getting lost in the symphonic, robust flavors.

Chef George says General Manager Edgar Roelofs, is an incredibly valuable addition to our team as his food is divine, and his desserts deserve a special article on their own!

To check things out yourselves, call Giorgio's at the Manchebo Beach Resort. It is open for dinner nightly. □



FIRST EDITION OF BUGALOE OPEN GOLF

Fun golf tournament sponsors Animal Rights Aruba



TIERRA DEL SOL - On April 25th at 12:30pm the first Bugaloe Open Golf Tournament will be a fact. Players from Aruba and around the world are already teaming up to play this the tournament that has become notorious even before the shotgun start. This two player scramble golf tournament has the motto: Fun, Friends... and

Golf! In a relaxed ambience and organized in every detail, the Bugaloe Open will welcome any golfer, no matter what handicap one has.

The tournament takes place on the Trend Jones II 18-holes golf course of Tierra del Sol. Upon start all players will receive a snack package and a delicious lunch will be served



on the golf course, with of course beverages of your choice. For the best 3 teams there are great prizes to win, just as for the longest drive and closest to the pin. You can also win a pick up truck when hitting a hole in one!

Right after the golf tournament the splashing After Party takes place at Bugaloe Beach Bar & Grill where the players will enjoy a complimentary dinner buffet and premium bar. What a way to ease out the day... it's the Bugaloe way!



By playing the Bugaloe Open you are sponsoring Animal Rights Aruba, a non-profit Animal Welfare Image Organization that aims to protect all Fauna, Flora and Marine Life on and around the island of Aruba. A major contributor to the tournament

is Heineken Aruba.

It's already possible to register for the tournament at the Pro Shop of Tierra del Sol (586 0978) or by email: oliver.riding@tierradelsol.com. Bugaloe Beach Bar is located at De Palm Pier between RIU Palace and Radisson Resort.

Eagle Beach to be enriched with an Oasis

WWW.OASISARUBA.COM

LEARN HOW YOU CAN BECOME PART OF THIS LUXURY CONDOMINIUM RESIDENCE



EAGLE BEACH - Oasis Luxury Condominiums is a Mediterranean-style designed complex located on the prestigious Eagle Beach right next to Chalet Suisse consisting of a total of 35 units distributed on five (5) floors. The one, two and three bedroom suites have a perfect view of the ocean and beach. The units include, among other amenities, floor to ceiling glass doors and panoramic windows, spacious terraces, marble bathrooms, European kitchens with granite counter tops and a full stainless steel appliance package including washer and dryer. This 35-condominium complex will feature a beautiful swimming pool with a beach style entry with

waterfalls and fountain and state of the art fiber optic lighting. The entrance of the building has a drive-up covered entrance and an elegant two-story lobby leading to the sun-filled hallways and corridors. The common area will facilitate the owners with a well-equipped gym overlooking the gardens and the pool. The garden will feel like an oasis true to the projects name. There will also be a recreation room and sofas throughout the com

mon area to lounge and relax.

Further amenities include a 24/7 security, a full concierge and a rental program for the owners who want to earn a return on their investment. The concierge service will be helpful to assist the owners in making their 'homecoming' a very pleasant return. Each condo will have one designated parking space exclu-

35 EXCLUSIVE OCEAN VIEW UNITS STARTING IN THE LOW 400'S

sive to the owners.

Construction on Oasis at Eagle Beach is moving fast. Fifteen of the thirty five units have already been sold. The condominiums will be ready for occupancy by March 2010. Oasis is located on Eagle Beach which allows for an easy access, even on foot, to the best casinos, restaurants, golf courses, shopping areas and night life the Aruba has to offer.

The experienced sales team of Oasis invites you for a visit to learn about this new gem on the beach.

The site tour will take you up in the complex where you will enjoy spectacular views of the ocean and beach as well as a wonderful view of Oranjestad where the cruise ships are docked. The views from the rooftop terrace are stunning to say the least. The Oasis sales team is ready to assist you.

COME VISIT US FOR A PERSONAL TOUR

OFFICE HOURS:
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MVCI celebrates 25 years of Unforgettable vacations

Marriott's Aruba Ocean Club, Marriott's Aruba Surf Club remain prime locations



ORANJESTAD – In its silver anniversary year, Marriott Vacation Club International (MVCI) will welcome back an astonishing 400,000 vacation owners to its individual properties in Aruba as well as throughout the

world. In 1984, Marriott became the first branded hospitality company by nearly a decade to enter the timeshare industry. Its entry into the market was followed by a string of successes, which include the award-winning

vacation ownership properties of Marriott's Aruba Ocean Club and Marriott's Aruba Surf Club.

Built on the "Marriott Way" philosophy, with excellence in accommodations, amenities and especially customer service a primary focus, vacation ownership with MVCI has flourished to now include choices of 50 resorts in 30 destinations with more than 10,600 villas worldwide. While it is often the beauty of the properties themselves, set in idyllic environments, which win over MVCI owners and members, the benefits of quality management and unique flexibility ensure lifelong satisfaction in unforgettable vacation experiences.

The industry took notice of MVCI's winning ways, bestowing the business world's highest honor of the Stevie™ on MVCI in different categories over several years. MVCI won for "Best Sales Organization" at the inaugural of the American Business Awards in 2003, and again in 2006 and 2008. In 2007, MVCI also received recognition as the "Best Customer Service Organization". The secret for MVCI's success, in achieving both tremendous growth and high satisfaction rates among its clientele, can be attributed to an immense amount of imagination and innovation.

MVCI has, in fact, managed to redefine the timeshare industry. It was the first to replace industry-standard fixed weeks with seasonally-based, floating

time. By tailoring ownership to better suit its members, MVCI has quickly expanded. In 1996, it was the first branded hospitality company to enter the timeshare industry in Europe with the opening of Marriott's Marbella Beach Resort on Spain's Costa del Sol. Another first was achieved in 2001 with the opening of Marriott's Phuket Beach Club in Thailand representing the milestone of the first branded hospitality

company to enter the timeshare industry in Asia.

Along with the option to exchange weeks with priority within the Marriott Vacation Club portfolio, MVCI owners also have access to Interval International's global system of more than 2,300 resorts in over 75 countries. With an ability to vacation almost anytime of the year, anywhere in the world, MVCI owners enjoy countless possibilities.

In Aruba, many MVCI members choose to remain at the treasured location of either Marriott's Aruba Ocean Club or Marriott's Aruba Surf Club for their annual vacation, keeping the destination on the top tier of the most requested locations. But on the occasions that travel is



not possible, MVCI even offers owners the opportunity to trade their time for Marriott Rewards points, or even rent their weeks. With MVCI celebrating its 25 years of unforgettable vacations, there is no better time to consider the benefits of vacation ownership with the Marriott. For a limited time only, on certain inventories, owners and non-owners purchasing at Marriott's Aruba Surf Club are eligible for special offers in celebration of this 25th anniversary.

For more information about MVCI, please visit the sales gallery located in Marriott's Aruba Ocean Club, call Tel: 586-2641, or visit the website: www.vacationclub.com or www.marriottsarubasurfclub.com.

“Aruhiba” Aruba’s homemade cigar



ORANJESTAD - Benjamin Petrochi has started the newest

export product of Aruba, locally produced cigars called ‘Aruhiba’. These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba. Petrochi has always had an interest in the cigar business and has also sold cigars from outside, and now he is growing his own tobacco crop. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba he started his own production and cultivation of “Aruhiba” cigars in Aruba. The process took 5 years Petrochi’s dedication to the cigars is important for the molding and



process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. The cigar case is specially designed for the cigars with the logo ‘Aruhiba’ and ‘Made in Aruba’. Petrochi considers ‘Aruhiba’ a promotion for Aruba through fine quality cigars.

The company sells international cigars as well. Buy a gift box of Aruhiba Corona with five cigars and get 1 free for \$35.00.

Located at the Historic Dutch



Windmill from 9am to 8pm. Open on Sunday.

And also at Tamarijn: open 9am - 5pm and Sunday from 9am to 1pm.

The only place to get Aruhiba and all major credit cards accepted.

We have homemade and best premium Cuban Cigars. All cigars are legal through costum.

Call 586-7833 or 593-6177. Open for tour operators and we have a large parking space. Come and see Mr. Petrochi rolling the cigars everyday.



At the Crystal Theater

“Havana Dance,” is the hottest Cuban show on the island



ORANJESTAD - The Dance” explodes on stage with a thrilling mix of Latin & Cuban music, colorful excitement of Las Vegas as the magnificent “Havana contemporary Cuban

dance.

“Havana Dance” is the biggest stage production in the Caribbean, featuring Cuban dancers and entertainers directly from Havana. The show delivers a purely Cuban spectacle, with a cast of 12 female ballerinas, 4 male dancers, 2 singers and 3 acrobats, performing a fresh program accompanied by live Cuban music performed on stage by a genuine Cuban orchestra, consisting of 5 professional Cuban musicians. This live dance AND live music combination as seen in our pictures, is ‘first of its kind’ on the island.

While the greater part of the “Havana Dance” review enjoys predominantly Cuban flavor, the show is graced with a truly unique Caribbean choreography, and many tropical touches. “Havana Dance” unfolds on a two-tiered stage, with entrances and exits to and off the arena at different heights, which presents a



new visual concept. The custom-designed costumes are sensual, daring, colorful, and luxurious and set “Havana Dance” apart from any other cabaret.

Producer Steve Hudson who enjoyed an unprecedentedly-successful seven-year run with his previous “Let’s Go Latin” review, conceived and created an exciting and much-evolved new must-see spectacle.

Tickets for “Havana Dance” are US\$ 49.- Children under 12 pay US\$25.-

Tickets are available at the theater box office, Renaissance Aruba Resort, and can also be purchased

at the concierge’s desk at the Renaissance Aruba Resort. Other ticket vendors include the De Palm Tours and Pelican Adventure Activity Centers at the resorts. A special dinner & show package is also available in conjunction with the L.G. Smith’s Steak & Chop House for US\$89.- per person.

For additional information and reservations call the Crystal Theatre at Tel.: 583 6000, ext. 6115, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. After 5 p.m., call tel.: 583 6000 ext. 6357. Don’t miss an opportunity to be greatly entertained by the sizzle of “Havana Dance.” □





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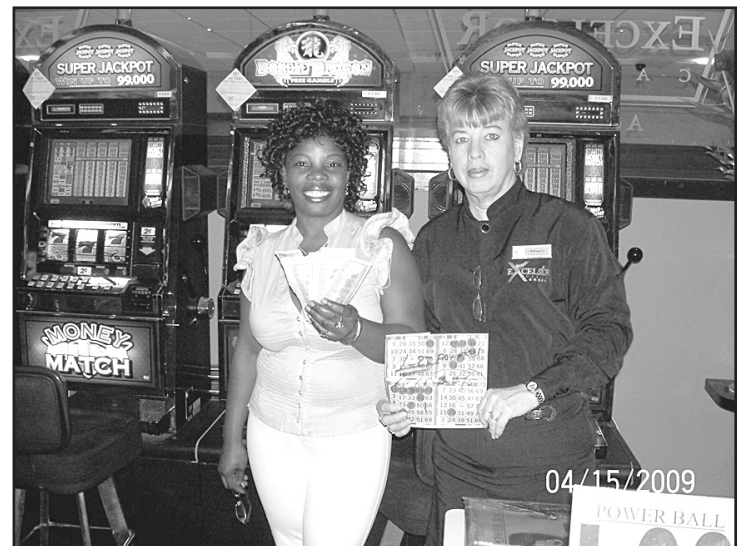
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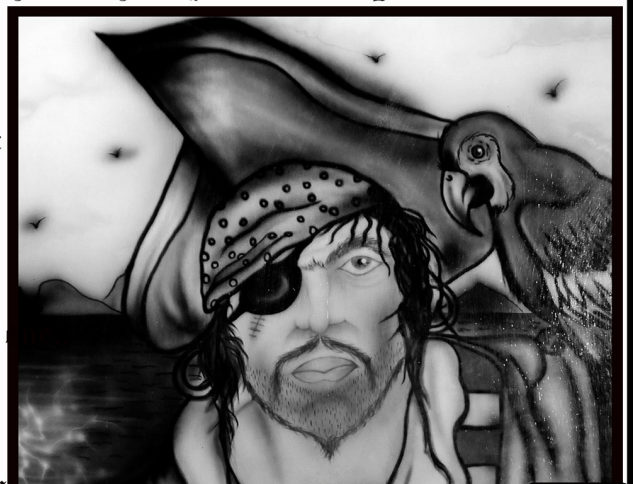
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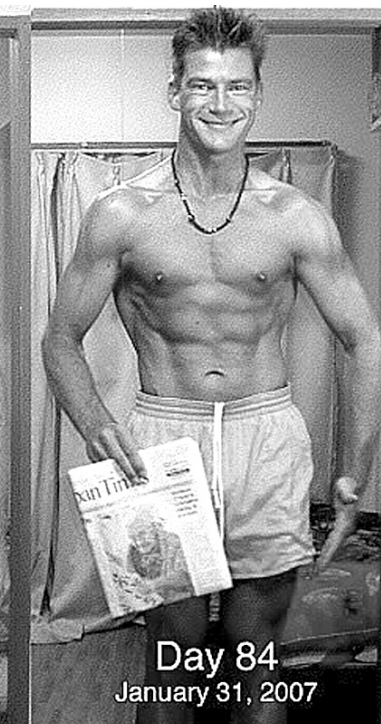
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Aruba is getting ready for the “Real Challenge 2009”



ORANJESTAD - The real challenge is about to begin, this is what has been said by Charles Franken, Chando Colina, DJ Alah y Rene Wild. After sitting together one day last month they were talking about the weight issues on the Island and they came up with the idea of a weight loss challenge sort of a boot camp.

This starts on April 20th with inscription at Quiznos Restaurant, organizers hope to reach at least 300 to 500 participants for this challenge.

First day of challenge will be held in front of the US departure at the airport, and it a 3 month commitment. This all has from Zumba classes to hiking together with a proper menu.

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Saba attends Barbados Trade Show

This week Saba will be represented for the first time at the "Rediscover the Caribbean" tourism show held in Barbados. This event has been held for six consecutive years, and this is the first time that participation has become a reality for the Island of Saba. Commissioner of Tourism, Chris Johnson, and Tourism Director, Glenn Holm will be attending the event.

The conference will be held at the Sandiford Conference Center on April 24th and April 25th. This show has already started its promotion as of April 14th and the participating islands have been highlighted on the popular



morning show, Channel 8 "Morning Barbados". Saba's new promotional

video is also being aired on the morning show.

Holm informed GIS that Saba will have an 8x8 stand

at the event where they are distributing tourism informationsuchasattractions and accommodations. Approximately five thousand

people are expected to visit the show over the two day period.

The Island Territory of Saba in recent months has discussed remarketing Saba's tourism strengths to a more regional market. "Our reasoning for attending this event is because we're concentrating more on regional tourism", confirmed Director Glenn Holm.

In addition to attending the show in Barbados, Saba is also advertising in the TV guide of French Sint Maarten and St. Barths. Next month Saba will also be represented at the SMART show in Sint Maarten.



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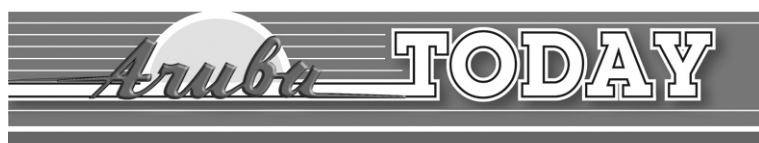
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Obama says reaching out to enemies strengthens US

PORT-OF-SPAIN, Trinidad – Defending his brand of world politics, President Barack Obama said Sunday that he “strengthens our hand” by reaching out to enemies of the United States and making sure that the nation is a leader, not a lecturer, of democracy.

Obama’s foreign doctrine emerged across his four-day trip to Latin America, his first extended venture to a region of the world where resentment of U.S. power still lingers. He got a smile, handshakes and even a gift from incendiary leftist leader Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, and embraced overtures of new relations from isolated Cuban President Raul Castro.

“The whole notion was that if we showed courtesy or opened up dialogue with governments that had previously been hostile to us, that that somehow would be a sign of weakness,” Obama said, recalling his race for the White House and challenging his critics today.

“The American people didn’t buy it,” Obama said. “And there’s a good reason the American people didn’t buy it — because it doesn’t make sense.”

Still, Obama made sure to inject some go-it-slow caution and

clear expectations for U.S. foes as he capped his trip to twin-island nation of Trinidad and Tobago with a steamy outdoor news conference.

On Cuba, he said Castro should release political prisoners, embrace democratic freedoms and cut fees on the money that Cuban-Americans send back to their families. Obama has lifted some restrictions on Cuba, and Castro responded with a broad, conciliatory overture.

“The fact that you had Raul Castro say he’s willing to have his government discuss with ours not just issues of lifting the embargo, but issues of human rights, political prisoners, that’s a sign of progress,” Obama said. “And so we’re going to explore and see if we can make some further steps.”

He did not, though, offer any sign of lifting the crushing U.S. trade embargo on Cuba, as many Latin American and U.S. leaders want. Obama acknowledged that the U.S. policy in Cuba for the last 50 years “hasn’t worked” but said change will be gradual.

In Washington, both Democrats and Republicans said Sunday that they wanted to see actions, not just rhetoric, from Cuba.

“Release the prisoners and we’ll

talk to you. ... Put up or shut up,” said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C.

“

I think we’re taking the right steps, and I think the ball is now clearly in Cuba’s court,” said Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo. “They need to respond and say what they’re willing to do.”

As for Venezuela, Obama’s friendly encounters with Chavez at the summit drew intense publicity — partly, Obama said, because Chavez is good at getting in front of TV cameras. Chavez’s anti-American rhetoric has, in the past, led Obama to call him a demagogue.

Obama returned to Washington early Sunday evening. But even before he got back, Obama was facing condemnation from some Republicans about how he dealt with Chavez. “I think it was irresponsible for the president to be seen kind of laughing and joking with Hugo Chavez,” said Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev.

The president brushed that aside, noting that Venezuela has a defense budget about one-six hundredth the size of the United States’ and owns the oil company Citgo.

“It’s unlikely that as a consequence of me shaking hands or having

a polite conversation with Mr. Chavez that we are endangering the strategic interests of the United States,” Obama said.

Venezuela and the United States expelled each other’s ambassadors last September. But during the summit, Chavez approached Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and said he was restoring his nation’s ambassador in Washington, voicing hopes for a new era in relations.

“We ratify our willingness to begin what has started: cementing new relations,” Chavez said Sunday in remarks broadcast on state television. “We have the very strong willingness to work together.”

Obama’s dealings with Chavez spoke to his broader message: dismissing arguments of the past, and respecting other democratic governments even if he opposes their economic and foreign policy.

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The president said he found it interesting that many of the leaders talked about how Cuban doctors have dispersed throughout the region, and their countries depend on them.

“It’s a reminder for us in the United States that if our only interaction with many of these countries is drug interdiction, if our only interaction is military, then we may not be developing the connections that can, over time, increase our influence,” Obama said. He neglected to mention that the U.S. Agency for International Development provides many services in Latin America, including health care, education and humanitarian relief.

Central American leaders who met with Obama said they pressed him on immigration reform. They also said that Obama promised to consider providing better notice before the United States deports dangerous criminals back to their nations.

Even Nicaragua President Daniel Ortega, a critic of U.S. policy, said he found Obama receptive to dealing with the issues raised. Ortega said Obama “is the president of an empire” that has rules the president cannot change. Nevertheless, Ortega said, “I want to believe that he’s inclined, that he’s got the will.” Both Graham and McCaskill spoke on “Fox News Sunday.” Ensign was interviewed on CNN’s “State of the Union.”

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Moby Dick's orchestrates Anniversary Celebration Tony and Mirta celebrate 40 years of blissful marriage



After living a blissful life together they decided to move to the Netherlands in 1985 and have been there ever since, but Tony wishing to come back to his family in Aruba decided together with his wife to move back to Aruba in 2007. As they say patience is once greatest virtue when being married and if you're with the one you suppose to spend the rest of your life with everything goes a bit easier.

And where better for them to celebrate with all their family this milestone in their life but at the beautiful Moby Dick Restaurant in the Paseo Herencia Mall, Moby Dick had the perfect romantic ambience boosting their private second floor dining area.

All family and friends had a great evening, and we want to wish this couple many more years of blissful marriage.

PASEO HERENCIA - It has been 40 years since the lovely couple Tony and Mirta met each other, they were sweat hearts living in the same neighborhood in the downtown area. After going

steady for almost a year, they took the big step and down to city hall on the 10th of March in 1969, after a month on the 10th of April they flew to the Colombia and made it official with a church ceremony.



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PALM BEACH – Fishes and More Restaurant opened up in the Arawak Gardens just 3 and a half years ago and has been a great success since day one. **PALM BEACH** – Fishes and More Restaurant opened up in the Arawak Gardens just 3 and a half years ago and has been a great success since day one. Word on the street is that once you eat at **Fishes and More**, consider yourself addicted. The owners Jeroen Kuling and Hans Heijink together with the staff Romalo, Heidi, Mariella, Denise and Chef Gerben work hard keeping the restaurant **open 7 days a week from 4 pm till 11pm** for everyone to enjoy. The ambiance at the restaurant is out of this world, whether dinning inside in the relaxed air-conditioned

dinning room or outside on the terrace to enjoy the tropical breeze and daily live music. Most guests come in early for the **daily fresh catches**, such as Red snapper, grouper, mahi mahi, wahoo and tuna. Check with the server to find out about the Catch of the day. The chef will be more than happy to prepare your fish the way you like it best: grilled, deep-fried, pan-fried or the chef's choice. **Every Wednesday, seafood specials are prepared** depending on what the Fishermen bring in fresh out of the water that afternoon. These



specials usually include fresh Caribbean lobster and pounds of peeled shrimps. **Fishes and More** is for everyone, from large groups, families, couples and even singles who can't shake the seafood addiction can stop in for a fix of Pina Colada Shrimp. For those who like to try something different or have had their fill of spectacular seafood, the chef prepares a wonderful array of filet mignon, rib eye, wienerschnitzel, veal parmesan, and pasta specialties. **Great Seafood!!!** Fun and relaxed atmosphere. Right across from the high rise hotels. It is worth the short walk to a wonderful dinner ☐



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PALM BEACH – The health and calorie conscious among us need fear steakhouses no more. Whether it's a low-carb, low-fat, or even vegetarian diet you follow, Texas de Brazil Churrascaria fits into just about every dieter's menu plan.

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The Brazilian-style steakhouse also offers a garden full of healthy eats on a lavish 40-item seasonal salad bar, giving dieters plenty to choose from to accompany the

slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but **Texas de Brazil's** version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portabella mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, home-made soups, and much more.

The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking to splurge while on vacation, **Texas de Brazil** will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal.

**Restaurant
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Monday - Sat 6 pm - 11
Sunday 5 pm - 11 pm

For more information or to
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Obama says reaching out to enemies strengthens U.S.

President Barack Obama speaks during his final news conference at the 5th Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Sunday, April 19, 2009. Associated Press

BEN FELLER
Associated Press Writer
PORT-OF-SPAIN, Trinidad (AP) — Defending his brand of world politics, President Barack Obama said Sunday that he “strengthens our hand” by reaching out to enemies of the United States and making sure that the nation is a leader, not a lecturer, of democracy. Obama’s foreign doctrine emerged across his four-day trip to Latin America, his first extended venture to a region of the world where resentment of U.S. power still lingers. He got a smile, handshakes and even a gift from incendiary leftist leader Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, and embraced overtures of new relations from isolated Cuban President Raul Castro. “The whole notion was that if we showed courtesy or opened up dialogue with governments that had previously been hostile to us, that that somehow would be a sign of weakness,” Obama said, recalling his race for the White House and challenging his critics today. “The American people didn’t buy it,” Obama said. “And there’s a good reason the American people didn’t buy it — because it doesn’t make sense.” Still, Obama made sure to

inject some go-it-slow caution and clear expectations for U.S. foes as he capped his trip to twin-island nation of Trinidad and Tobago with a steamy outdoor news conference. On Cuba, he said Castro should release political prisoners, embrace democratic freedoms and cut fees on the money that Cuban-Americans send back to their families. Obama has lifted some restrictions on Cuba, and Castro responded with a broad, conciliatory overture. “The fact that you had Raul Castro say he’s willing to have his government discuss with ours not just issues of lifting the embargo, but issues of human rights, political prisoners, that’s a sign of progress,” Obama said. “And so we’re going to explore and see if we can make some further steps.” He did not, though, offer any sign of lifting the crushing U.S. trade embargo on Cuba, as many Latin American and U.S. leaders want. Obama acknowledged that the U.S. policy in Cuba for the last 50 years “hasn’t worked” but said change will be gradual. In Washington, both Democrats and Republicans said Sunday that they wanted to see actions, not just rhetoric, from Cuba.

“Release the prisoners and we’ll talk to you. ... Put up or shut up,” said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. “I think we’re taking the right steps, and I think the ball is now clearly in Cuba’s court,” said Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo. “They need to respond and say what they’re willing to do.” As for Venezuela, Obama’s friendly encounters with Chavez at the summit drew intense publicity — partly, Obama said, because Chavez is good at getting in front of TV cameras. Chavez’s anti-American rhetoric has, in the past, led Obama to call him a demagogue. Obama returned to Washington early Sunday evening. But even before he got back, Obama was facing condemnation from some Republicans about how he dealt with Chavez. “I think it was irresponsible for the president to be seen kind of laughing and joking with Hugo Chavez,” said Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev. The president brushed that aside, noting that Venezuela has a defense budget about one-six hundredth the size of the United States’ and owns the oil company Citgo.

Continued on next page



Patrick Ireland, a field director with a financial services company, poses for his picture at his office in Denver, Colo., on Wednesday, April 15, 2009. Ireland, the “boy in the window” during the horrifying Columbine High School shooting ten years ago is doing just fine. Many Columbine survivors, like Ireland, have moved on to careers in education, medicine, ministry and retail. Yet lingering emotional scars still trigger anxiety, nightmares and deeply etched recollections of gunfire, blood and bodies. Associated Press

Columbine students strive 10 years after massacre

SANDY SHORE
Associated Press Writer
LITTLETON, Colorado (AP) — The “boy in the window” — who fell bloodied and paralyzed into the arms of rescuers during the horrifying Columbine High shooting rampage — is doing just fine. Now 27, Patrick Ireland has regained mobility with few lingering effects from gunshot wounds to his head and leg a decade ago. He is

married and works in the financial services industry. His mantra: “I choose to be a victor rather than a victim.” Like Ireland, many survivors of the April 20, 1999, massacre have moved on to careers in education, medicine, ministry, retail. But emotional scars still can trigger anxiety, nightmares and deeply etched recollections of gunfire, blood and bodies.

Continued on page 6

U.S. boycotts, Iran stars, at UN racism meeting

BRADLEY S. KLAPPER
Associated Press Writer

GENEVA (AP) — The United Nations opens its first global racism conference in eight years on Monday with the U.S. and at least seven other countries boycotting the event out of concern that Islamic countries will demand that it denounce Israel and ban criticism of Islam. The administration of President Barack Obama, America’s first black head of state, announced Saturday that it would boycott “with regret” the weeklong meeting in Geneva, which already is experiencing much of the bickering and political infighting that marred the 2001 conference in Durban, South Africa.

Continued on page 10



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Reaching out

Continued from front page

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In this photo released by Miraflores Press Office, Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez, left, talks to President Barack Obama during the 5th Summit of the Americas in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Sunday, April 19, 2009.

Associated Press

the president cannot change. Nevertheless, Ortega said, "I want to believe that he's

inclined, that he's got the will." Both Graham and McCaskill

spoke on "Fox News Sunday." Ensign was interviewed on CNN's "State of the Union."

Americans back legal aid to poll, new poll says

WASHINGTON — Americans strongly support government-paid legal services for the poor, says a poll commissioned by the Legal Services Corp.

Two-thirds of those polled for the American Bar Association by Harris Interactive said they favor federal funding for people who need legal assistance.

Legislation introduced in March by Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, would nearly double the budget for Legal Services, which Congress created 35 years ago, and lift restrictions on the kinds of cases legal aid lawyers can file. The ABA, the nation's largest lawyers group, backs the bill.

The Legal Services Corp., a nonprofit corporation that is funded by Congress, distributes grants to legal aid groups in all 50 states. The state and local groups help poor people involved in civil cases, including domestic violence, child custody, housing foreclosures, veterans and Social Security benefits, consumer problems and health issues.

Harkin said his proposal to raise Legal Services' budget

to \$750 million from the \$390 million it is getting in the current government spending year would give legal aid programs roughly the same amount of money, adjusted for inflation, that they received in 1981.

Even before the full force of the recession hit, Legal Services reported last year that cash-strapped legal aid programs around the country had to turn away half of all eligible applicants.

Now those programs have been reporting a wave of new clients seeking help to ward off foreclosure, grapple with late payments on medical bills, and recoup delinquent child support.

In the ABA poll, 53 percent said their financial situation had deteriorated in the past six months and 28 percent said they are concerned they might need legal help as a result.

The poll was conducted by telephone by Harris Interactive April 1-5 among 1,016 U.S. residents age 18 and older. Harris did not provide a margin of sampling error.



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Loss still felt 14 years after OK City bombing

TIM TALLEY

Associated Press Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)

— It was 14 years ago when Doris Battle's parents were killed in the Oklahoma City bombing, just two of the 168 people who died during the nation's worst domestic terrorist attack.

Battle was among 400 people who gathered Sunday to observe the 14th anniversary of the bombing of the nine-story Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, an attack that also injured hundreds of people. The explosion of a truck loaded with 4,000 pounds of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil tore the face off the building and caused millions of dollars in damage to other downtown structures.

"I can't go home and see him anymore," Battle said of her father, Calvin Battle, who died with her mother Peola when the Oklahoma City federal building was bombed on April 19, 1995. And Battle said the passage of time has not diminished the loss she still feels.

Timothy McVeigh was executed in 2001 and Terry Nichols is serving multiple life sentences on federal and state convictions for their convictions in the bombing. Prosecutors had said the plot was an attempt to avenge the deaths of about 80 people in the government siege at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, exactly two years earlier.

Dr. Paul Heath, a retired psychologist with the

Veterans Administration and a bombing survivor, attended the ceremony at the bombing memorial, where 168 empty chairs symbolizing the victims sit on a grassy field where the building stood.

"The memory of the bombing is just as clear today as it was the day after the bombing. The memories run just like a video in my head," Heath said, who placed flowers at a granite memorial for survivors like himself.

Retired Marine Staff Sgt. Ted Krey tied American flags to chairs bearing the names

of Sgt. Benjamin LaRanzo Davis and Capt. Randolph A. Guzman, killed in the building's Marine Corps recruiting office.

During the ceremony, the crowd observed 168 seconds of silence and survivors and victims' family members read victims' names at the spot that the Rev. Tom Ogburn of First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City called "holy ground."

"In our faith, we found hope," he said. "We were wounded but not broken."



A flag and flowers mark the chair of Captain Randolph A. Guzman in the field of chairs at the Oklahoma City Memorial and Museum on the 14th anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing, in Oklahoma City, Sunday, April 19, 2009. Associated Press

Homeland Security leaders defend memo on veterans

TIM TALLEY

Associated Press Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)

— Top Department of Homeland Security officials on Sunday defended an agency intelligence assessment warning that veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan could be susceptible to recruitment by right-wing extremists, though one said it should have been "more tightly written and presented."

Homeland Security chief Janet Napolitano said on CNN's "State of the Union" that she regrets that some people took offense over the report, but added that "a number of groups far too numerous to mention" were targeting returning veterans to carry out domestic terrorism attacks.

She said the warning report,

which went out to American law enforcement agencies two weeks ago, was consistent with earlier reports.

The report, which also warned of veterans engaging in lone acts of violence, was criticized by conservatives who called it offensive and said the agency should apologize to veterans.

Deputy Secretary Jane Holl Lute, in Oklahoma City for ceremonies marking the 14th anniversary of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, said it is wrong to characterize the report's distribution as an attempt to insult veterans but acknowledged that "it should have been more tightly written and presented."

Lute, an Army veteran and former assistant secretary-general of the United Nations in charge of peacekeeping

operations, said the agency was taking "very seriously" the threat that right-wing domestic extremists could use the lagging U.S. economy and the election of the country's first black president to recruit members.

Lute said the agency didn't focus on any one group because of its members' beliefs or backgrounds but that it was more interested in the likelihood that a group might turn to violence.

The report mentioned Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Timothy McVeigh, a decorated Army veteran convicted of detonating an explosives-laden truck in front of the federal building, killing 168 people and injuring hundreds. McVeigh was executed in 2001, and his former Army buddy Terry Nichols is



Jane Lute, deputy director of U.S. Homeland Security, is pictured during an interview with the Associated Press at the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum in Oklahoma City, Sunday, April 19, 2009. Associated Press

serving multiple life prison terms for his role in the attack.

Lute said her agency assesses all potential hazards and that the Oklahoma City bombing was "a reminder to the country that we can't be complacent."

Health care: Deal or no deal? Senators begin work



In this April 2, 2009 file photo Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, the top Republican on Senate Finance Committee, center, and committee member Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., left, talk with Health and Human Services Secretary-designate, Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius on Capitol Hill in Washington. Associated Press

ERICA WERNER
Associated Press Writers
WASHINGTON (AP) — This time it's really going to happen. Or so they claim. Senators get down to work this coming week on turning ideas into legislation to cover some 50 million people without health insurance and contain

costs for everyone else. Hopes are high that Democrats and Republicans can find common ground for a bill to emerge by summer. They will have to defy history in one of the only developed countries without national health care. Grand plans to revamp health care have a half-century

history of collapsing. More focused proposals, such as the creation of Medicare for low-income people in 1965, have succeeded.

Lawmakers are far apart on some of the most important issues today, from the reach of government to the responsibilities of employers and individuals. And guaranteeing coverage for all could cost \$1.5 trillion over 10 years, an eye-popping sum in a time of recession and mounting national debt.

Yet major constituencies often at odds are now clamoring for change. They range from consumer groups to insurers, from employers to doctors and hospitals. President Barack Obama has pledged to chip away at hardened ideological positions to find compromises.

"This is the toughest issue we have ever taken on — every part has got a chance of blowing up," said Iowa Sen. Charles Grassley. He is the top Republican on the Senate Finance Committee, which oversees government health programs and taxes, and plans to start work Tuesday.

Grassley said he is reasonably

confident that he and the Democratic committee chairman, Sen. Max Baucus, can produce a bill that appeals to the middle. "Our only hope is if we do it in a way that keeps the vast majority of both parties going in the same direction," Grassley said.

Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden sees opportunity. "There is a very appealing philosophical truce within the Senate's grasp," he said.

"Democrats are right on the idea that we've got to cover everybody. Republicans have been right on the role of the private sector, not freezing innovation and staying away from price controls," Wyden said. "You meld those philosophical views and you are on your way to 68 to 70 votes."

Consensus is growing on many points: Changes should build on the current system, not scrap it; hospitals and doctors should be paid for quality, not quantity; insurers shouldn't be able to discriminate against people with health problems; small businesses need special attention.

But huge differences remain. Three of the hardest issues are:

Costs:

Obama set aside \$634 billion in his budget as a "down payment" for health care over 10 years. Many experts believe that represents less than half the cost. Covering the uninsured could cost \$100 billion to \$150 billion a year, or more.

Liberal Democrats want to follow Obama's example and get half the money from tax increases and half from spending cuts. Upper-income tax increases and sales tax increases on alcoholic beverages, tobacco products and even sugary sodas are being discussed.

But Republicans and fiscally conservative Democrats want most of the financing to come from spending cuts and from making the health care system less wasteful.

Mandates:

Health insurance is based on pooling risk: premiums from the vast majority of healthy people cover care for the sick. For the system to work, economists say, everyone should have health insurance from the outset so uninsured people don't end up going to the emergency room and driving up costs for everyone else. Because insurance is expensive, requiring people and businesses to pay for it is politically difficult. Most people now get insurance from their employers, but companies aren't required to offer it and as the economy skids more have cut back.

Obama and Democrats are considering a combination of requirements on individuals, parents and employers, with exemptions for small businesses and sliding-scale subsidies for families making as much as \$80,000 a year.

Republicans opposed an employer mandate in the 1990s, but have mixed views on an individual requirement. The insurance industry is supporting an individual mandate. Labor unions are pushing for employer mandates.

Public Plan:

Obama and the Democrats want to give middle-class workers and families the option of joining a government-sponsored insurance plan that would be offered alongside private ones through a new insurance clearinghouse.

Supporters say a public plan could be a testing ground for innovations and a check on private insurers. Republicans see it as a thinly disguised step toward a government-run system. Insurance companies say they wouldn't be able to compete with a government plan. Efforts are under way to find a compromise, maybe by limiting the scope of the public plan. But Republican Rep. Dave Camp, who is playing a leading role in the House, said he doesn't think a deal is possible. "The public plan is a bright line for us," said Camp.

History of major health coverage proposals The Associated Press

A look at the history of major health coverage initiatives by presidents:

1950: Harry Truman's proposal for national health insurance dies in Congress.

1965: Lyndon Johnson wins passage of Medicare and Medicaid.

1974: Richard Nixon's proposal to require employers to cover workers dies in Congress.

1979: Jimmy Carter's proposal for an employer requirement dies in Congress.

1994: Bill Clinton's plan, which includes an employer requirement, dies in Congress.

1997: Clinton and a Republican Congress agree to expand coverage for low-income children.

2003: George W. Bush wins passage of Medicare prescription benefit.

2009: Barack Obama proposes to cover the uninsured and contain costs.

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Children drown in accidents in Arkansas, Texas

MORRILTON, Arkansas (AP) — Three children died early Sunday morning in Arkansas when the car they were in drove straight into a man-made lake, authorities said. Their mother survived.

Arkansas State Police investigators and sheriff's deputies questioned the children's mother about what happened just after 3:30 a.m., when she apparently drove down an old state highway that dead-ends into the gunmetal blue waters of Brewer Lake, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) west of Little Rock.

A series of strong thunderstorms and fog rolled through the area around the time of the crash.

Conway County Sheriff Mike Smith declined to immediately identify the children, ages 2, 7 and 8, or their 26-year-old mother, who had not been arrested or charged as of Sunday afternoon, the sheriff said.

"We're going to run back through what she said," Smith told The Associated Press. "We want to make sure we do a good job on that."

Smith said many in Conway County use the old highway to back boats into the lake, which is a state wildlife management area. The lake serves as the main drinking water source for the nearby city of Conway.

In a separate accident in Texas, police in Houston recovered the body of a 1-year-old girl — one of five children killed when a man lost control of his car while using his cell phone and plunged the vehicle into a rain-filled ditch.

The driver, Chanton Jenkins, 32 was charged late Sunday with four counts of intoxication manslaughter, Houston police spokesman Kese Smith said. Smith said Jenkins failed a field sobriety test after the accident Saturday, which followed torrential rain storms.

The bodies of three boys — ages 4, 7 and 11 — were found inside the vehicle. Police still were searching for the body of a 3-year-old girl, Smith said.



Houston firefighters search the water for a vehicle that went into the bayou after heavy rains drenched the area Saturday, April 18, 2009, in Houston. A fire official says five Houston children are feared dead after the car was swept away by high water.

Associated Press

Jenkins and another adult escaped from the vehicle, along with a 10-year-old girl. It took 2½ hours to find the car in the ditch, which had filled with 9.5 feet of fast-moving water.

Police said the vehicle was swept 100 feet from the spot

where it left the road.

Police said the adult passenger, who is Jenkins' brother, told police Jenkins was the father of four of the children, including the 10-year-old girl who escaped. The other two children were believed to be family friends, Smith said.

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Columbine

Continued from front page

Some have written books; a few travel the world to share their experiences to help victims of violence.

“People have been able to have 10 years to reconcile what happened and see what fits in their life and who they are,” said Kristi Mohrbacher of Littleton, who fled Columbine as the gunfire erupted. “It’s kind of a part of who I am today. I think my priorities might be a little bit different if I hadn’t had that experience.”

Just after 11 a.m. on that day, Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, stormed the suburban school, killing 12 classmates and a teacher and wounding about two dozen. The massacre ended with the gunmen’s suicides not quite an hour later.

Sean Graves saw the pair loading weapons in a parking lot and thought they were preparing a senior prank with paintball guns.

Graves, Lance Kirklin and Daniel Rohrbough were walking toward them for a better look when the gunmen opened fire, killing Rachel Scott and Rohrbough and critically wounding Anne Marie Hochhalter, Graves and Kirklin, among others.

In the second-floor library, Ireland was about to finish some homework when he heard pipe bombs exploding in the hallway. Debris fell from the ceiling and a teacher shouted for students to take cover.

Klebold and Harris strode in, shouted for students to stand up, laughing and ridiculing classmates as they sprayed bullets.

Ireland was under a table with Dan Steepleton and Makai Hall when they were shot in the knees. Ireland was shot twice in the head and once in a leg, and lost consciousness.

The killers shot out a



library window. Graves, lying partially paralyzed on a sidewalk below, worried that they would return. He smeared blood from his neck wound on his face and the ground to make it appear he was dead.

Harris and Klebold killed 10 students in the library before they left to reload, which gave some survivors a chance to flee. Steepleton and Hall tried to pull Ireland but couldn’t move him far before they fled for safety. Shortly before noon, the gunmen returned to the library and committed suicide.

Ireland awoke some time later, his vision blurred. With fire alarms sounding and strobe lights flashing, the partially paralyzed teen began to push himself toward the bullet-shattered window. Over the next three hours, he pulled his body along, lost and regained consciousness, then moved again through tables and chairs and past classmates’ bodies. He figures he traveled about 50 feet to the window.

“I thought how much easier it would be just to give up, stay there and let somebody come get you or whatever would happen to you,” Ireland said.

“But every time those thoughts came in my mind, I thought about all the people that I would be giving up on. ... It was really the friends and family I would be letting down that kept me going.”

Ireland pushed himself up to the window and got the attention of elite police teams below. He doesn’t recall flopping over the sill and dropping into the arms of rescuers, the image that grabbed the attention of TV viewers across the United States.

Graves, now 25, moved into a suburb near the mountains, where he recently purchased a home with his fiancée, Kara DeHart, 22. He walks with a limp and still feels pain but keeps a positive attitude. He plans to return to college to pursue a career in forensics science, a path that began to interest him after Columbine.

On Monday’s anniversary, Graves will go back to the spot where he was shot, smoke a cigar and leave another on the ground for Rohrbough, something he does every year.

With two children at Columbine, Ted Hochhalter watched the drama unfold on

television while waiting in a Seattle airport for a flight back to Denver. He arrived to find his daughter, Anne Marie, paralyzed and in critical condition, and that his son Nathan had been trapped, but unhurt, in the science wing for four hours. He took a leave of absence from his job as a government emergency management coordinator. Six months later his wife, Carla, who had a history of mental illness, walked into a pawn shop, picked up a gun and committed suicide.

Hochhalter believes the aftermath of the shootings exacerbated his wife’s illness. “It got to a point where she made a choice,” he said. He moved the family into the mountain community of Bailey and married Katherine Zocco, a massage therapist specializing in neuromuscular, spinal cord and brain injuries who worked with Anne Marie and other Columbine survivors. Anne Marie, now 27, graduated from Columbine in 2000 and lives in a Denver suburb where she works as a retail store manager and a child advocate. Her father retired with a medical

disability for post traumatic stress disorder.

The elder Hochhalters are working with John-Michael and Ellen Keyes, whose daughter Emily was killed in a 2006 school shooting in Bailey, to get parents involved in school emergency management programs.

Patrick Ireland, the boy in the window, endured grueling therapy to regain the use of his legs, and he had to relearn how to read, write and talk. With a control-your-destiny determination, he graduated as valedictorian from Columbine and magna cum laude from Colorado State University. Today, he is a field director for Northwestern Mutual Finance Network in the Denver area and has been married to Kacie for nearly four years.

Ireland recognizes he’ll long be remembered as the face of Columbine because of his dramatic rescue. He accepts it as a way to emphasize that Columbine should be another word for “hope and courage.”

And how does he want to be remembered?

“A triumphant recovery and success story.”



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Pakistan: Suspected U.S. missiles kill 3, wound 5

NAHAL TOOS

Associated Press Writer

ISLAMABAD (AP) —

Suspected U.S. missiles leveled a Taliban compound in northwest Pakistan on Sunday, officials said, killing three people despite militant threats of a wave of suicide bombings if the strikes don't end.

Meanwhile, a hardline cleric who mediated a deal that imposes Islamic law in a northwest valley in exchange for peace with the Taliban warned that the Pakistani government must enforce the law, not simply make announcements about it. Pockets of Pakistan's northwest regions bordering Afghanistan are havens for al-Qaida and Taliban fighters. Many are believed involved in attacks on U.S. and NATO forces across the border, and American officials say the missile strikes are a key tool in taking them out.

Sunday's suspected strike occurred in South Waziristan tribal region, the main stronghold of Pakistani Taliban chief Baitullah Mehsud, who is believed allied with the al-Qaida terrorist network.

Shahab Ali Shah, South Waziristan's top administrative official, said three people died and five were wounded in the Zari Noor village area. The identities of the dead and wounded were not immediately clear.

Haji Gul Zaman, who lives just outside Zari Noor village, said he heard two blasts and saw plumes of smoke rising from the area. Trucks carrying Taliban fighters raced toward the scene, Zaman said.

Since August, the U.S. has escalated its use of drone-fired missiles along Pakistan's lawless northwestern regions, launching about three dozen. The U.S. rarely discusses or acknowledges the strikes, which are believed fired by unmanned drones operated by the CIA.

The pro-Western Pakistani government has demanded an end to the strikes, saying that although they have killed several militant leaders, they also fan anti-American sentiment and violate the country's sovereignty.

The latest strike came a day after a suicide car bomber killed 27 people — most of them security forces — at a checkpoint in the Hangu town area, another rough-and-tumble region in the northwest.

Responsibility for the bombing was claimed by Hakeemullah Mehsud, a Taliban commander who has vowed to carry out two suicide attacks a week to press for an end to the missile strikes. "We are meeting our pledge. ... We will intensify our attacks if the drone strikes in the tribal areas do not stop," Mehsud told The Associated Press by telephone from an undisclosed location.

Under intense international pressure, especially from the United States, Pakistan has tried various tactics to crack down on militancy, including military offensives and negotiations.

It recently agreed to impose Islamic law in the northwest's Swat Valley and surrounding areas in exchange for peace with the Taliban there — a move that riled human rights activists and drew criticism from the White House.

The cleric who mediated that deal demanded the government take meaningful steps to enforce the new system over the next month, including setting up proper appeals courts in four days. Already, a handful of

judges trained in Islamic law have begun hearing cases.

"Mere announcement is not enough to enforce the system," Sufi Muhammad said at a rally of thousands of supporters in Swat.

The terms of the deal remain murky, but Pakistani officials have insisted an Islamic judicial system in Swat would not echo the harsh rule of the ousted Taliban regime in neighboring Afghanistan.

A variety of militant groups operate in Pakistan's northwest, and turf wars sometimes break out.

On Sunday evening, Taliban fighters in the Bajur tribal region clashed with supporters of Muhammad, a fight that left three people dead, local government official Faramosh Khan said.

Pakistan's army staged a monthslong offensive against militants in Bajur, declaring victory a few weeks ago, but rumblings in there in recent days have indicated the insurgency is not fully vanquished.

Maulvi Umar, a spokesman for the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan



Residents pray during a gathering to celebrate the signing of peace agreement between government and Taliban in Barri Kot, 28 miles from Mingora, in Pakistan's Swat valley, Saturday, April 18, 2009. Pro-Taliban Islamists are on a roll in Pakistan, emboldened by the government's decision to impose Islamic law in the northwestern Swat valley to appease militants who were fighting the Pakistani army.

Associated Press

— or the Pakistani Taliban Movement, an umbrella group headed by Mehsud — told AP that Sufi Muhammad's followers were trying to get control of the area by raising their own militia.

"We want to make it clear that

only the Tehrik-e-Taliban has a right to hold weapons and dominance in this region," he said.

But Sufi Muhammad's son, Rizwan, told AP that their organization had nothing to do with the encounter.

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Former South African President Nelson Mandela, center, is helped as he walks up the stairs by current ANC president and presidential candidate Jacob Zuma, left and Mandela's former wife Winnie, at the start of an ANC rally in Johannesburg, South Africa, Sunday, April 19, 2009. Associated Press

Mandela appears at ANC rally before SAfrica vote

CELEAN JACOBSON
Associated Press Writer

JOHANNESBURG — A frail, 90-year-old Nelson Mandela struggled to the stage Sunday at the ANC's last rally before South Africa's election, receiving cheers that rivaled the tumultuous greetings given to Jacob Zuma — the party's popular presidential candidate whose face was emblazoned on Mandela's T-shirt.

Mandela's unexpected appearance before 100,000 ANC supporters gathered at adjacent stadiums in central Johannesburg, and other South Africans watching on national TV, began with a drive around a field in a golf cart with Zuma at his side. Then Mandela was helped onto the stage, where he was seated next to former wife Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, one of the ANC's most popular leaders.

Mandela did not address the crowd but listened as a brief video message he had recorded earlier was shown on a giant screen.

In his message, Mandela said the ANC was best placed to lead South Africans in "our primary task" of eradicating

poverty and improving the lives of a black majority neglected under apartheid and still far behind whites and an emerging, tiny black elite.

Mandela looked in strong spirits and smiled and waved to the crowd.

It was only the second appearance of this campaign for Mandela, who has largely retired from public life. But no one has doubted his loyalty to the party that South Africans embrace for defeating apartheid, and building homes and creating jobs since it won power in the first all-race vote in 1994.

Mandela, who was jailed for 27 years for his opposition to apartheid, served one term as the nation's president, from 1994 to 1999. The constitution allows two, but he stepped aside for younger leaders and to focus on fighting AIDS and supporting international peacemaking efforts.

The theme of the rally, "We are winning," reflected the party's optimism. Members of parliament elect the president, and considering the ANC's overwhelming popularity, Zuma, 67, is virtually assured

of becoming president.

Some say the former guerrilla is the country's most popular leader since Mandela.

Walter Kwatsi, a 33-year-old supermarket worker who carried a handmade poster comparing Zuma to President Barack Obama, was among the millions of poor South Africans who believe the ANC leader will bring much-wanted improvements to their lives.

"All the people love Jacob Zuma," Kwatsi said Sunday. "He's the man who's going to deliver — deliver water, electricity, houses, jobs, everything."

Old ladies in starched outfits in the ANC colors of green, gold and black joined skimpily clad women — also in the party colors — Sunday. Young men and women brought a touch of bling with their glitter-encrusted T-shirts reading "Young, Gifted and ANC."

The ANC launched its campaign with promises of massive public spending to create jobs. It has pulled back on such rhetoric in the face of the global economic downturn, and Zuma on Sunday stressed the modest goal of keeping

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PG-13	DUPLICITY	daily: 5:05			late show:	
		matinee: 12:05	2:40			
PG-13	12 ROUNDS	daily: 7:30	9:50		late show: 12:10	
		matinee:				
PG	PAUL BLART: MALL COP	daily: 4:15	6:20	8:20	10:15	
		matinee: 12:10	2:15	late show: 12:15		
PG-13	MADEA GOES TO JAIL	daily: 5:20	7:35	9:55	late show: 12:05	
		matinee: 12:55	3:10			
PG	DRAGONBALL EVOLUTION	daily: 4:05	6:00	7:55	10:00	
		matinee: 12:15	2:10	late show: 11:50		
PG-13	FAST & FURIOUS	daily: 5:40	7:50	10:10	late show: 12:20	
		matinee: 1:20	3:30			

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PG	DRAGONBALL EVOLUTION	daily: 4:00	5:50		late show: 12:00
		matinee: 12:15	2:10		
PG-13	MADEA GOES TO JAIL	daily: 7:45	10:00		late show: 12:20
		matinee:			
PG	PAUL BLART: MALL COP	daily: 4:15	6:10	8:15	10:10
		matinee: 12:10	2:15	late show: 12:15	
PG-13	12 ROUNDS	daily: 5:10	7:30	9:50	late show: 12:10
		matinee: 12:30	2:50		
PG-13	DUPLICITY	daily: 4:25	6:55	9:20	late show: 11:55
		matinee: 1:55			
PG	MONSTERS VS ALIENS	daily: 5:40	7:50	9:55	
NEW		matinee: 1:20	3:30	late show: 12:00	
PG-13	FAST & FURIOUS	daily: 5:45	7:55	10:10	late show: 12:30
		matinee: 1:25	3:35		

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Algerian president sworn in for third term

ALGIERS, Algeria (AP) — Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika was sworn in Sunday for a third term, promising to pursue his policy of national reconciliation to bring peace to a country torn by an Islamist insurgency. However, Bouteflika made no mention of the general amnesty for armed Islamists that he had evoked during his electoral campaign.

With his hand on the Muslim holy book, the 71-year-old president took the oath of office before ministers, lawmakers, union leaders and, unusually, several former heads of state, including Ahmed Ben Bella, who served as Algeria's first

president after this North African country gained independence from France after a brutal seven-year war. "I am determined to continue and strengthen the national reconciliation that the Algerian people have massively supported, that permitted a return to civil peace and in the future should contribute to ... guaranteeing national unity," Bouteflika said in a speech.

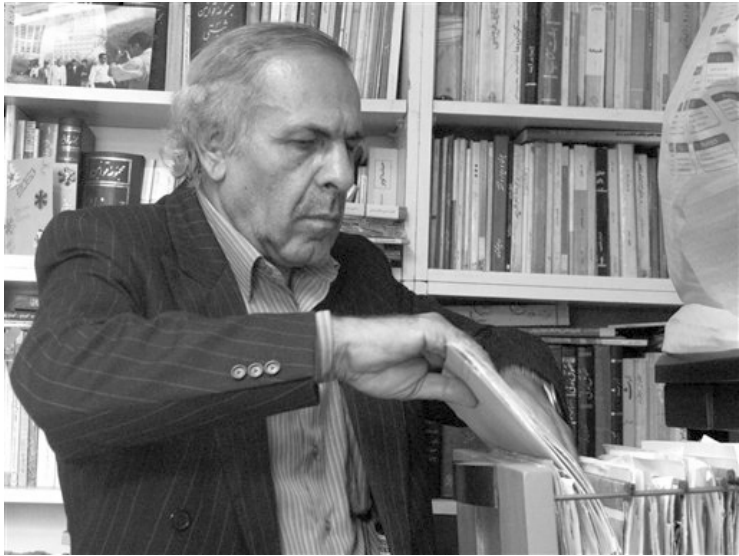
Thousands of armed insurgents have turned themselves in under Bouteflika's national reconciliation policy aimed at healing the violence-racked nation. Algeria, at one point, was deeply torn



Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika listens to the national anthem after he was sworn in as President of Algeria at the Presidential Palace in Algiers, Sunday, April 19, 2009. Associated Press

between radical Islamists who took up arms in a bid to create an Islamic state and those opposed.

Iran president urges full defense for U.S. reporter



Abdolsamad Khorramshahi, lawyer of American-Iranian journalist Roxana Saberi, 31, who has been convicted of spying and sentenced to eight years in prison, adjusts documents in his office in Tehran on Saturday April 18, 2009.
Associated Press

NASSER KARIMI
Associated Press Writer
TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's president said Sunday that an American journalist convicted of spying for the U.S. should be allowed to offer a full defense during her appeal, a day after she was sentenced to eight years in prison. The message was a sign that Iran's leadership does not want the case to derail moves toward a dialogue with the Obama administration to break a 30-year diplomatic deadlock.

Hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sent a letter to Tehran's chief prosecutor instructing him to personally ensure that "suspects be given all their rights to defend themselves" against the charges. "Prepare for the court proceedings ... to observe and apply justice precisely," the state news agency IRNA quoted him as saying.

The letter came a day after Iran announced the conviction and sentence for Roxana Saberi, a 31-year-old dual American-

Iranian citizen who was born in the U.S. and grew up in Fargo, North Dakota. It was the first time Iran has found an American journalist guilty of espionage, and her lawyer said he'll appeal.

President Barack Obama said Sunday he was "gravely concerned" about Saberi's safety and well-being and was confident she wasn't involved in espionage. The U.S. has called the charges baseless and said Iran would gain U.S. goodwill if it "responded in a positive way" to the case.

"She is an Iranian-American who was interested in the country which her family came from. And it is appropriate for her to be treated as such and to be released," Obama said.

Saberi's case has been an irritant in U.S.-Iran relations at a time when Obama is offering to start a dialogue between the longtime adversaries. A few days before her sentence was announced, Ahmadinejad gave the clearest signal yet that Iran, too, was ready for a new relationship with the U.S.

Ahmadinejad's letter also referred to Canadian-Iranian blogger Hossein Derakhshan, who has been in an Iranian prison since November on charges of insulting religious

figures. Ahmadinejad requested the prosecutor also ensure that he be allowed to fully defend himself, IRNA reported.

Iran has released few details about the charges against the two. Saberi was arrested in January and initially accused of working without press credentials. But earlier this month, an Iranian judge leveled a more serious allegation that she was passing classified information to U.S. intelligence services.

She told her father in a phone conversation that she was arrested after buying a bottle of wine. Her father said she had been working on a book about Iranian culture and hoped to finish it and return to the U.S. this year.

Saberi, who was 1997 Miss North Dakota, had been living in Iran for six years and worked as a freelance reporter for news organizations including National Public Radio and the British Broadcasting Corp. Because Saberi's father was born in Iranian, she received Iranian citizenship.

Her parents, who live in Fargo, traveled to Iran to seek her release. Her father, Reza Saberi, has said his daughter wasn't allowed a proper

defense during her one-day trial behind closed doors a week ago. He said no evidence has been made public, and his daughter was tricked into making incriminating statements by officials who told her they would free her if she did.

He told CNN on Sunday that her trial lasted only 15 minutes. "It was a mock trial," he said.

One Iranian analyst said Ahmadinejad's letter was politically motivated and suggested Iran could be using Saberi's case to gain leverage with the U.S.

"Iran can use Saberi's case as a bargaining card in possible negotiations with the U.S.," said analyst Saeed Leilaz.

The United States severed diplomatic relations with Iran after its 1979 Islamic revolution and takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. Relations deteriorated further under former President George W. Bush, who labeled Iran as part of the so-called "Axis of Evil."

Iran has been mostly lukewarm to the Obama administration's overtures until Ahmadinejad's comment last week that he was ready for a new start.

Sri Lanka: 17 rebels dead in clashes to clear road

KRISHAN FRANCIS
Associated Press Writer
COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Sri Lankan soldiers killed 17 Tamil Tiger separatists in fighting to clear a road that would give the military access to remaining rebel territory where thousands of civilians are trapped, the Defense Ministry said. The rebels, who once controlled a de facto state in parts of the country's north and east, have retreated to a tiny slice of land that the government had earlier declared a "no-fire zone" for civilians fleeing the fighting in the island's nation's civil war. The United Nations estimates

that more than 100,000 civilians are trapped in the area, which measures only 7.7 square miles (20 square kilometers), and has voiced concern for their safety. More than 2,800 civilians were able to flee the war zone on Saturday, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said. The Defense Ministry said Sunday that 17 rebels were killed and 22 wounded in offensives the day before aimed at clearing new escape routes for the civilians and a road link for the military to enter the zone. It did not say if there were military casualties.

Human rights groups have

accused the rebels of using the civilians as human shields and the government of indiscriminately shelling populated areas and disregarding the civilians' safety. Both sides deny the allegations. The government suspended its offensive for two days last week to allow civilians to leave, but only a few hundred departed. Authorities have since rejected widespread international calls for a longer cease-fire to allow humanitarian workers to move the civilians to safety.

The U.N. estimates that some 4,500 noncombatants have been killed in the last three months amid fierce fighting



In this photo taken Tuesday, April 14, 2009, Sri Lankan ethnic Tamil children wait in a queue to receive food at a camp for internally displaced people in the war zone in Putamattalan, Sri Lanka.

Associated Press

as government forces have closed in on the rebels, aiming to bring a final end to the 25-year civil war. The rebels have been fighting to create an independent homeland for ethnic minority

Tamils, who have faced decades of marginalization by successive governments controlled by ethnic Sinhalese. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the violence.

Racism meeting

Continued from front page

The Netherlands, Germany and New Zealand announced their boycotts Sunday, while Australia, Canada, Israel and Italy already had said they would not attend.

“I would love to be involved in a useful conference that addressed continuing issues of racism and discrimination around the globe,” Obama said in Trinidad on Sunday after attending the Summit of the Americas.

But he said the language of the U.N.’s draft declaration risked a reprise of Durban, during which “folks expressed antagonism toward Israel in ways that were often times completely hypocritical and counterproductive.”

“We expressed in the run-up to this conference our concerns that if you adopted all of the language from 2001, that’s not something we can sign up for,” Obama said.

“Hopefully some concrete steps come out of the conference that we can partner with other countries on to actually reduce discrimination around the globe, but this wasn’t an opportunity to do it,” he said.

Some European countries are still deciding whether to attend the U.N. conference. Britain said it will send diplomats, despite concerns the meeting could become a forum for Holocaust denial or anti-Semitic attacks.

At the Vatican, Pope Benedict XVI said the conference is needed to eliminate racial intolerance around the world. Asia News, a Catholic news agency that is part of the missionary arm of the Vatican, said of the pope’s comment: “The Holy See is distancing itself from the criticisms of some Western countries.”

“I am shocked and deeply disappointed by the United States’ decision not to attend,” said U.N. human rights chief Navi Pillay, who is hosting the conference.

She conceded some countries were focusing solely on one or two issues to the detriment of the fight against intolerance, but said it is essential that the issue of racism be tackled globally.

The major sticking points regarding the proposed final U.N. declaration are its implied criticism of Israel and an attempt by Muslim governments to ban all criticism of Islam, Sharia law, the prophet Muhammad and other tenets of their faith.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad — who repeatedly has called for the destruction of Israel and denied the Holocaust — is slated to speak on the first day.

He arrived in Geneva on Sunday evening and met privately with President Hans-Rudolf Merz of Switzerland, the country that represents the diplomatic interests of the United States in the Islamic republic.

The pullout of Germany is significant since it has played a leading role in U.N. anti-racism efforts as a result of its troubled historical legacy. In recent meetings, it has expressed dismay about some governments’ attempts to downplay the significance of the Holocaust.

Germany said Sunday that it made its boycott decision after consulting with other European Union nations.

“This decision was not easy,” said German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. “As in Durban in 2001, this conference could be abused by others as a platform for their interests. We cannot accept that,” he said.

The bland U.N. draft statement does not mention Israel by name, but it reaffirms the Durban statement and its reference to the plight of Palestinians. That document was agreed after the United States and Israel walked out over attempts to liken Zionism — the movement to establish a Jewish state in the Holy Land — to racism.

Israel and Jewish groups have lobbied hard against Western participation in the meeting, arguing that the presence alone of American and European negotiators would give legitimacy to what they fear could become an anti-Semitic gathering.

On Sunday, Israel’s Foreign Ministry thanked the boycotters and predicted the conference would “once



again serve as a platform to denigrate Israel and single it out for criticism.”

Still, after years of preparations there appears little evidence to validate these fears. The statement of 2001 that is so contentious now was cheered in Israel at the time, as it recognized the Jewish state’s right to security.

Regarding its boycott, the Obama administration said

it could not endorse any statement that singled out Israel or included passages demanding a ban on language considered an “incitement” of religious hatred. Such calls “run counter to the U.S. commitment to unfettered free speech,” said State Department spokesman Robert Wood.

Many Muslim nations want curbs to free speech to prevent insults to Islam they claim

have proliferated since the terrorist attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001. They cite the 2005 cartoons of Muhammad published by a Danish newspaper that sparked riots in the Muslim world.

European countries also have criticized the meeting for focusing heavily on the West and ignoring problems of racism and intolerance in the developing world.

Two Koreas to hold first dialogue in a year

KWANG-TAE KIM

Associated Press Writer

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea on Sunday accepted North Korea’s proposal for talks on a troubled joint industrial complex, setting up the first official dialogue between the two countries in a year amid tensions over the North’s recent rocket launch.

Unification Ministry spokeswoman Lee Jong-joo said officials of the two Koreas would meet in the border town of Kaesong on Tuesday to discuss the factory complex. South Korea announced Saturday that the North had made the surprise call for a meeting.

The industrial zone on the northern side of the border is the last major joint project between the rival Koreas and a key source of foreign currency for the impoverished North’s communist regime.

Ties between the Koreas have been strained since conservative President Lee Myung-bak took office in Seoul last year with a tougher line on the North. North Korea responded by cutting off ties.

In recent months the North has restricted access to the industrial complex by tightening border controls, raising concerns among participating South Korean companies about the project’s viability.

The meeting comes amid rising tensions over the North’s rocket launch and its weekslong detention of a South Korean man in Kaesong accused of denouncing the North’s political system.

North Korea has expelled international monitors, vowed to quit six-nation disarmament talks and

restart its nuclear program to protest the U.N. Security Council’s condemnation of the April 5 launch.

North Korea insists it sent a satellite into space, but regional powers say nothing reached orbit and the launch was actually a test of long-range missile technology.

“We will thoroughly ensure that the inter-Korean contact will be made in a way that secures the safety of people and contributes to the development of the Kaesong complex,” Lee said, in an apparent reference to the detained South Korean.

North Korea is also holding two female American journalists who allegedly crossed the border from China on March 17 while reporting on North Korean refugees. It has said it will try the journalists — Laura Ling and Euna Lee of former Vice President Al Gore’s Current TV media venture — on charges of entering the country illegally and engaging in “hostile acts.” Sunday’s announcement came a day after North Korea’s military warned South Korea to stay out of a U.S.-led security initiative aimed at halting the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

An unidentified North Korean military spokesman said South Korea’s full participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative would be seen “as a declaration of undisguised confrontation and a declaration of a war” against North Korea. South Korea’s Unification Ministry expressed regret Sunday over the North’s threats and said joining the program would not be a “declaration of confrontation or war.”

Mexico says eight killed in attack on prison convoy

MARK STEVENSON

Associated Press Writer

MEXICO CITY (AP) — In the latest of a series of brazen, drug-related attacks, gunmen ambushed a prisoner transfer convoy in western Mexico, killing eight officers in a failed attempt to free a high-level cartel member, police said Sunday.

At least 20 assailants fired in three separate gun barrages Saturday on the dwindling column of vehicles as it raced between an airport and prison in the Pacific coast state of Nayarit, police said.

Police called it a well-planned attack intended to free Jeronimo Gamez, cousin of Arturo Beltran Leyva, the reputed leader of one of Mexico's most powerful cartels. Gamez was arrested in Mexico City in January and was being moved to a prison in Nayarit's capital city, Tepic. Police officials said the fallen officers "fulfilled their duty with professionalism, commitment and dedication."

The attack came three days after a bold assault on an army patrol in the nearby state of Guerrero, where 15 assailants and one soldier died, and just a day after officials reported 12 people dead across the state of Michoacan, including three who were beheaded.

The assaults by emboldened, heavily armed cartels bracketed the first official visit Thursday by U.S. President Barack Obama, who vowed to step up enforcement of laws banning the transfer of guns across the U.S.-Mexico border. Soldiers seized two .50-caliber Barrett rifles, 17 other rifles and eight grenades at the Guerrero scene.

Officers still managed to deliver Gamez and eight other prisoners, who were being transported in an armored vehicle, said an employee of the state prosecutor's office, who was not authorized to be quoted by name.

The other escort vehicles apparently were not armored and fared badly in the attacks,

which began just outside the airport.

Photos from the scene showed battered police pickup trucks with shot-out windows, crumpled fenders or bullet holes and blood stains from the fallen police.

Four federal police officers, two federal investigative agents and two prison employees died in the attack. There was no immediate information on the number of injured or wounded and no reports of deaths or arrests among the attackers. Prosecutors accuse Gamez of acting as Beltran Leyva's representative in negotiating drug deals with Colombian traffickers.

Mexico has suffered a continuing wave of drug-related violence, killing more than 10,650 people since 2006, when Calderon sent 45,000 troops to directly confront the traffickers.

In the western city of Morelia, 400 federal police, using two Blackhawk helicopters



A policeman stands with others near a destroyed police vehicle after a clash with an armed group in Tepic, Mexico, Saturday, April 18, 2009. Eight Mexican law enforcement officers were killed Saturday in a brazen attack on a police convoy transporting an important drug suspect to a prison in western Mexico.

Associated Press

and an airplane, swooped in on a baptismal party being held Saturday by alleged members of the Familia Michoacana cartel. Police detained 44 people, including a man allegedly in charge of recruitment for the Michoacan-based gang.

Federal police commissioner Rodrigo Esparza said that suspect Rafael Cedeno claimed to have trained 9,000

recruits for the cartel in 2008, hinting at the gang's size and power.

The White House on Wednesday added the Familia Michoacana to the U.S. government's blacklist of drug syndicates, known commonly as the Drug Kingpin Act.

U.S. officials say the gang moves massive amounts of cocaine from Colombian drug dealers.



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NATO ships, helicopters hunt down seven pirates



in this Greek navy handout photo released on Wednesday, April 1, 2009, a navy commando is seen detaining a speedboat with suspected Somali pirates tied up alongside a Greek frigate in the Gulf of Aden after a failed attack on a Norwegian cargo ship. The navy said Greek commandos later released the five men after no arms were found on the vessel. Nobody was hurt in Wednesday's pirate attack, which the Norwegian Sigloo Tor's crew fought off with fire hoses.

Associated Press

KATHARINE HOURELD
Associated Press Writer
NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Repeated warning shots from NATO helicopters and warships ended a dramatic pursuit of seven Somali pirates who attacked a Norwegian tanker in the Gulf of Aden, NATO spokesmen said Sunday.

In the end, the pirates surrendered and were released under a technicality, and that prompted one analyst to warn that such treatment could only encourage them and other bandits to strike again off Somalia.

On Sunday, the Somali government called for the death penalty for pirates.

"Becoming a pirate is a crime, and Islam says if you become a pirate you should definitely be killed because you are killing the people," said Somalia's deputy prime minister, Abdurrahman Haji Adam. "We will announce it immediately."

But the announcement, which was linked to Saturday's vote to adopt Sharia law, is unlikely to have much effect. The government barely controls a few pockets of territory in Mogadishu, the capital, and is battling an Islamist insurgency. It has made no efforts so far to curb the heavily armed pirate gangs who openly flaunt their wealth in the coastal cities.

Islamic fighters also have

threatened pirates before but have not attacked pirate bases. Instead, they allegedly have established a quid pro quo relationship with the pirates, trading protection for a cut of the ransom money.

Pirate attacks have increased in recent weeks, with gunmen from Somalia searching for targets further out to sea as ships try to avoid the anarchic nation.

Pirates have attacked more than 80 boats this year alone, nearly four times the number assaulted in 2003, according to the Kuala Lumpur-based International Maritime Bureau. They now hold at least 18 ships and over 310 crew hostage, according to an Associated Press count.

On Saturday night, American and Canadian warships and helicopters chased the pirates' skiff for seven hours after their attack on the Norwegian-flagged MV Front Ardenne, said Cmdr. Chris Davies, from NATO's maritime headquarters in England. When the pirates finally surrendered, the NATO forces disarmed and interrogated the bandits, then freed them, citing legal issues over arresting them.

The consistent failure to punish or at least detain pirates could help convince them that they have little to lose from attempting fresh attacks, an analyst said.

"It's quite encouraging for

them," said Peter Lehr, the author of "Violence at Sea: Piracy in the Age of Global Terrorism" and a lecturer in terrorism studies at Scotland's University of St. Andrews. "The threat to your life is quite low and the chance you get arrested and sent to a not so nice Kenyan prison is quite low as well," he said in an interview.

Dozens of suspected pirates are in a crowded prison in the Kenyan port of Mombasa after the United States and the European Union agreed to bring suspects there. But many more have been released amid fears of further clogging up Kenya's judicial system and conflicts with the national law of some of the countries on anti-piracy patrols.

In this case, the pirates were

released because Canadian law did not allow their prosecution if they committed no crimes against Canadians or on Canadian soil.

"When a ship is part of NATO, the detention of person is a matter for the national authorities," Portuguese Lt. Cmdr. Alexandre Santos Fernandes said from a warship in the Gulf of Aden. "It stops being a NATO issue and starts being a national issue."

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, speaking at a news conference in Trinidad at the Summit of the Americas, said: "We did briefly detain pirates and disarm them, and I think those were the appropriate measures under the circumstances."

The seven had attacked the tanker late Saturday but fled after the crew took evasive

maneuvers and alerted warships in the area, said Cmdr. Davies.

Fernandes said no shots were fired at the tanker.

Davies said the pirates sailed into the path of the Canadian warship Winnipeg, which was escorting a World Food Program delivery ship through the Gulf of Aden. The American ship USS Halyburton also was in the area and joined the chase.

"The skiff abandoned the scene and tried to escape to Somali territory," Fernandes said. "Warning shots have been made after several attempts to stop the vessel."

The pirates hurled weapons into the dark seas as the Canadian and U.S. warships closed in, shouting warnings through loudspeakers.

Italy lets stranded migrants land

FRANCES D'EMILIO

Associated Press Writer

ROME (AP) — Italy agreed Sunday night to accept 140 migrants stranded aboard a Turkish cargo ship that rescued them in the Mediterranean, ending a four-day standoff with Malta about who would take them in.

The Italian government "has decided to let humanitarian reasons prevail," Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said.

"Malta should have taken them in," Frattini told state TV.

A Foreign Ministry statement said the decision was made "exclusively in consideration of the painful humanitarian emergency aboard the cargo ship" and that its acceptance of the migrants "must not in any way be understood as a precedent nor as a recognition of Malta's reasons" for refusing them.

Doctors taken aboard the 230-foot long Pinar by the Italian coast guard had found cases of chicken pox and high fever among the migrants, the Italian news agency ANSA reported, although coast guard officials had said that earlier medical checks had turned up nothing worrisome about the passengers' condition.

There was no immediate reaction from Malta. Frattini and Interior Minister Roberto Maroni, who is from the anti-immigrant Northern League Party, made the decision after consultations with Premier Silvio Berlusconi, who had spoken by telephone with both the European Commission president and with the Maltese prime minister.

During the standoff, the Pinar was anchored about 25 miles southwest of the tiny Sicilian island of Lampedusa.

Some 20 ailing migrants, as well as a pregnant woman, were transferred to a coast guard, which took them to Lampedusa late Sunday

night, ANSA reported. Authorities have not said what the migrants' nationalities are.

The remaining migrants were expected to be transferred by a convoy of Italian military boats to the Sicilian port of Porto Empedocle, ANSA said, and the Pinar, carrying a cargo of grain, would then continue its voyage to Tunisia.

The Foreign Ministry statement decried what it called the Maltese government's "persistent unwillingness" to take the migrants "despite appeals by from European Commission President" Jose Manuel Barroso.

Earlier Sunday, the coast guard delivered 1,000 liters of drinking water to the migrants aboard the Pinar, which had rescued them Thursday after the two small boats they were traveling in began foundering.

Two migrants had been evacuated by helicopter to Lampedusa on Friday because of poor health.

The 13-member Turkish crew also recovered the body of a young woman in one of the boats, Cmdr. Cosimo Nicastro, of the Italian coast guard said. The decomposing body was later taken by a motorboat to Lampedusa, ANSA said. Malta insisted that the Pinar take the migrants to Lampedusa because it is the nearest port. Italy contended Malta should have taken them because the ship was in Malta's search and rescue area.

Lampedusa has a holding center for illegal migrants.

Each year, tens of thousands of migrants pay smugglers to try to reach Italian shores. Often their boats capsize, and nearby fishing boats or military ships rescue them.

Maltese army authorities said Malta contends that under international maritime conventions, the nearest port of call is obliged to accept rescued seafarers.



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Few turn out in Haiti for delayed Senate election



Haiti's President Rene Preval has his thumb marked with ink after casting his vote in Senate elections at a polling station in Port-au-Prince, Sunday, April 19, 2009.
Associated Press

JONATHAN M. KATZ
Associated Press Writer
PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Clear-plastic ballot boxes were nearly as empty as Port-au-Prince's unusually deserted streets Sunday as few voters turned out for Senate elections in which candidates from a major populist party were not allowed to run. The vote had been seen as a key step in the development of Haitian democracy and in President Rene Preval's bid to retool the constitution and fight poverty. The international community gave Haiti's government \$12.5 million to coordinate the elections, including \$3 million from the U.S. But the vote, delayed since 2007 by political turmoil, hunger riots and storms, drew an extremely low turnout and occasional violence. Haiti's provisional electoral council told reporters it had

not calculated turnout or any results as of early evening. Supporters of ousted former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, whose Fanmi Lavalas party was disqualified from the election by Haiti's provisional electoral council, had urged an estimated 4 million registered voters not to participate. On Sunday, poll workers napped during long stretches when no voters came by. Some would-be voters carrying government-issued registration cards said they had been turned away by poll workers who said their names were not on registration lists. Others said they had trouble reaching the polls because police had ordered public transportation closed in an attempt to preserve order. "When you see this kind of low turnout, you have to wonder how interested people are in an election," said Edward Joseph, an observer

with the Haiti Democracy Project, a Washington-based think tank. He said apathy or fear of election violence could be to blame.

A total of 79 candidates were vying for 12 Senate seats. No results were expected Sunday. Most races had multiple candidates and were likely to end in run-offs.

Lavalas claimed victory for Sunday's poor showing, crediting a stop-the-vote campaign they nicknamed "Operation Closed Door."

"The people believe in Fanmi Lavalas. That is why they did not come out today," James Derozin, a former Lavalas lawmaker, told a reporters as polls closed around 4 p.m. Other Lavalas loyalists vowed to seek Preval's resignation if Sunday's results are accepted. Others in the capital blamed the low turnout on voter apathy after what they said were years of broken promises by elected leaders. "Since I've lived in Cite Soleil, nobody has come through for us. We don't trust anyone. Who are we going to vote for?" said Fritznor Remedor, a native of the oceanside slum who directs a U.S.-supported orphanage at the site of a former gang stronghold.

Calm generally reigned during the vote. While past elections have occasioned massacres and riots, Sunday's carless streets were instead occupied by young men and boys playing dozens of pick-up soccer games.

But there were several violent incidents. Elections

were canceled in the Central Department, one of Haiti's 10 administrative regions, after protesters raided polling places and dumped ballots in the streets of the central plateau town of Mirebalais.

A poll supervisor was shot there around 3 a.m. Sunday and is recovering in the hospital, said electoral council director general Pierre Louis Opont. Police said a man was arrested after firing guns to intimidate voters.

The council does not know who was responsible for incident but has ruled out Lavalas backers, Opont said. A date for replacement elections in the department will be set later, he added.

In Cite Soleil, supporters of Preval's Lespwa party smashed the windows of a Toyota Land Cruiser carrying Union party supporter and Haitian folk singer Barbara Guillaume, who said she was bringing food and documents to poll workers in Cite Soleil. Lespwa supporters said she was carrying money and food to bribe voters into supporting her candidate. Police fired shots to disperse the crowd, beat attackers with rifle butts and took them to Cite Soleil's new, U.S.-financed police station, where other Lespwa supporters threw rocks at the building.

They were released after their candidate, former Lavalas organizer and Cite Soleil native John Joel Joseph, visited the station. Guillaume was held without charges for about an hour and released.

Shortly after returning from the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad, Preval dropped his vote into a nearly empty clear plastic ballot box at a school in the capital. If his candidates win, Preval could see his economic projects and constitutional reform pass congress, where his Lespwa party already holds six of 18 Senate seats.

A majority for Lespwa would help Preval win a long-sought reform of Haiti's 1987 constitution, increasing executive powers and allowing presidents to seek consecutive five-year terms. It would also build support for his economic programs, meant to relieve poverty in a nation where 80 percent of people live on less than \$2 a day.

Preval, who was prime minister under Aristide, was elected president in 2006 with strong Lavalas backing. But many of Aristide's supporters now consider him and others in his party traitors for failing to return the exiled Aristide to Haiti. Lavalas petitioned the electoral council to allow its candidates to run for Senate, but its case was weakened by a split in the party. Council President Frantz-Gerard Verret said its candidates were disqualified because they failed to produce documents signed by Aristide, the party's leader who was flown to exile in Africa on a U.S. plane during a 2004 rebellion.

Twelve seats are now vacant after 10 senators' terms expired, one died in a car crash and another resigned.

Nigerian militants: UK hostage freed

By EDWARD HARRIS
Associated Press Writer

LAGOS, Nigeria — A British hostage who was captured more than seven months ago by Nigeria's main militant group was freed on Sunday, a senior military official said.

The captive, Robin Barry Hughes, was handed over to military officials in Nigeria's southern oil region, said the official, Sarkin Bello. He told The Associated Press in a telephone interview that he had no immediate information about Hughes' condition, or whether a ransom had been paid.

Earlier Sunday, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta militants said in an e-mail to

the AP that they would free Hughes "very soon," due to the man's poor health. The group later confirmed that Hughes had been liberated.

Hughes was among 27 oil workers kidnapped by militants when their vessel was hijacked in early September. The militant group said Matthew John Maguire, who was taken in the same incident with Hughes, was not going to be released along with his British compatriot. The other hostages have been released.

Hundreds of kidnappings have been reported in the southern Niger Delta in recent years, and the practice appears to be spreading into other parts of Africa's most populous nation and biggest oil

producer.

The militant group spearheaded the practice of seizing oil workers, with the stated political aim of forcing the government to increase its region's share of federally controlled petroleum industry funds.

But the practice has been taken up by ransom-seeking criminals in the oil region and, increasingly, beyond. Kidnappings of foreigners have been reported in recent weeks in three states outside the southern Niger Delta oil areas, including a Canadian woman taken Thursday in northern Kaduna state.



Exxon Mobil overtakes Wal-Mart to top Fortune 500



NEW YORK – Exxon Mobil Corp. unseated Wal-Mart Stores Inc. in the 2009 Fortune 500 list, shrugging off the oil price bubble and weathering what the magazine called the worst year ever for the country's largest publicly traded companies.

Bentonville, Ark.-based Wal-Mart had held the top spot for six of the last seven years but

fell to No. 2 this year. Still, the retail giant's 2008 revenue climbed 7 percent to \$405.6 billion, as the battered economy sent more consumers searching for bargains. The world's largest retailer took in \$13.4 billion in annual profit, an increase of about 5 percent.

Although it may have been a good year for Exxon and Wal-Mart, 2008 was far from rosy for most of remaining companies on the list. Overall earnings plunged 85 percent to \$98.9 billion from \$645 billion in 2007, the biggest one-year decline in the 55-year history of the Fortune 500 list.

"America is getting used to the sound of bubbles bursting," Fortune said. Energy companies continued to dominate many of the top positions, as last summer's

skyrocketing oil and gas prices more than compensated for their plunge later that fall. Chevron Corp. held on to third place with \$263.16 billion in revenue, up 25 percent. ConocoPhillips climbed one place to fourth, with \$230.76 billion in revenue. General Electric Co., the diverse conglomerate whose troubled financial arm has been weighing on recent results, rose one notch to fifth. Battered automaker General Motors Corp. fell two spots to sixth, as revenue fell 18 percent and losses totaled \$30.86 billion amid the imploding car market.

Crosstown rival Ford Motor Co. followed, with \$146.28 billion in revenue. Telecom giant AT&T Inc. moved up two notches to take eighth place, with Hewlett-Packard Co. and Valero Energy Corp. rounding out the top 10.

Among the hardest hit in 2008 were financial services companies, Fortune said.

Banks, securities firms and insurers took cumulative losses of \$213.4 billion, accounting for almost 70 percent of the total dollar decline from the peak year of 2006, the magazine said. Citigroup Inc. and Bank of America Corp., which were No. 8 and No. 9 respectively last year, each slipped a couple notches from the Top 10.

Thirty-eight companies fell off this year's list, including financial firms Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc., Washington Mutual Inc. and Wachovia Corp., all of which have either gone under or been acquired by rival banks. Engineering and construction company URS Corp. moved the most up the list, leaping 185 spots to No. 264. But the title of "biggest loser" went to AIG Corp. The insurer, which has received more than \$180 billion in government bailout aid since last fall, fell 232 spots to 245 in this year's ranking

Among the hardest hit in 2008 were financial services companies, Fortune said.

Flood of earnings will test market's 6-week run

NEW YORK – An intense week of earnings reports will tell whether Wall Street can extend its rally to a seventh week — or see its gains pop like a bubble.

With each week that the stock market lifts itself from the 12-year lows seen in early March investors grow at turns hopeful and nervous. The gains are welcome after torrential selling in February but too much too soon could fan worries that a rebound will quickly go into reverse. The coming week's flood of corporate earnings and important data on the housing market likely will bring the biggest test yet of whether traders have been correct in placing bets on a strengthening economy.

The Dow Jones industrial average will start the week up 24 percent from its March low. That's an enormous jump that might ordinarily take the market years to assemble so some traders are naturally skeptical.

Wall Street has allowed the gains because of tentative signs that the economy might be starting to right itself. Reports on home sales, manufacturing, retail sales and even unemployment have indicated the economy isn't sliding as quickly as it had been only months ago. But that doesn't mean investors can sound the all-clear. "The economy is still shrinking. It's just shrinking at a lesser rate," said Keith Hembre, chief economist at the First American Funds in Minneapolis.

Traders will take what they can get after a punishing drop that earlier this year left stocks

down by half from their peak in October 2007. There are still doubts because earlier rallies fizzled, including a 20 percent jump from November to early January.

Like the latest run, the earlier pop came in a relative quiet stretch, before earnings reports began. But the traders and analysts who were burned in January by ugly fourth-quarter results appear more guarded. They've set expectations so low that most of the companies turning in results are beating Wall Street's forecasts.

Of the 52 companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 index that have so far issued reports on the first quarter, 32 have had numbers better than analysts expected, according to Thomson Reuters. A handful of the results were in line with expectations and 17 had reports that fell short of expectations.

The surprises have been fuel for the rally. The showing from banks in particular has helped ease some of investors' worries about the economy. Citigroup Inc., JPMorgan Chase & Co., Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Wells Fargo & Co. all had better-than-expected news in the past two weeks. But with so many companies coming in ahead of analysts' forecasts, there is a danger that traders could start to hit the "sell" button if they're no longer impressed by companies that jump a low hurdle. And, this week, there will be far more companies reporting than in recent weeks so trading could be choppy as investors look for clues about what a company's results might signal for the economy.



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Gay sets Verizon Heritage scoring mark



Brian Gay acknowledges the gallery on the eighth hole after making birdie during the final round of the Verizon Heritage golf tournament Sunday, April 19, 2009, at Harbour Town Golf Links in Hilton Head Island, S.C.
Associated Press

By PETE IACOBELLI
AP Sports Writer
HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. — Brian Gay put on a record-setting show at the Verizon Heritage. And this time, he didn't have to share the spotlight with anyone. Gay shot a 7-under 64 Sunday to win at Harbour Town Golf Links by an astounding 10 shots. He broke the 13-year-old scoring record, finishing at 20-under 264 on the way to his second PGA Tour victory. "Just another unbelievable day," Gay said. There have been many more of them the last two years for the former Florida Gator, who remains the only player to win two Southeastern Conference championships. But finding golf success has been a struggle for the 37-year-old, who did not break through for his first win until his 293rd start in February 2008 at the Mayakoba Golf Classic in Mexico.

Bad luck for Gay, that triumph came the same weekend Tiger Woods' finished off the field at the World Golf Championships' Match Play event. "Yeah, it's a bit of validation," Gay said. And perhaps one of the PGA Tour's more dominating performances. He had the tour's largest margin of victory since Phil Mickelson won the 2006 BellSouth Classic by 13 strokes. Gay bested Loren Roberts' mark of 19 under in winning the 1996 Verizon Heritage. Gay's 10-shot edge over Luke Donald (66) and Briny Baird (68) shattered the seven strokes five-time champ Davis Love won by in 1998. Besides a \$1.026 million first prize, Gay earned a spot in next year's Masters, something he also didn't get with the Mayakoba victory. It will be his first time at

Augusta National. "I've had a lot of heartache not getting in that tournament, winning (and) not getting in, and missing by one spot on the money list two times," he said. "I just figured, who cares? What's going to happen is going to happen, just go play golf." Gay moved into the lead Friday and carried a three-stroke margin over Tim Wilkinson into the final round. Gay's game plan? Don't do what he did at Mayakoba, holding on despite some passive, wait-for-pars play. "I told myself to keep my head down and keep plugging along," Gay said. "I didn't watch any (leader) boards. I didn't watch anything." Soon enough, Gay was out of sight of the field. He essentially wrapped things up two holes into the round — and never gave the chasers a chance to climb back in.

Continued on page 20

Nadal wins fifth straight Monte Carlo Masters title

JEROME PUGMIRE
AP Sports Writer
MONACO (AP) — Rafael Nadal became the first player to win five straight Monte Carlo Masters titles by beating Novak Djokovic 6-3, 2-6, 6-1 Sunday. The top-ranked Spaniard, however, lost a set in Monte Carlo for the first time since the 2006 final against Roger Federer. "Fifth title here in Monte Carlo. I never expect something like this," said Nadal, who won his third title this season after the Australian Open and the Masters title on hard courts in Indian Wells, California. "Always really important for me (to) start the clay season

like this." Nadal trailed 3-1 in the first set before reeling off five straight games. Struggling on serve in the third, he saved three break points and needed 14 minutes to hold his opening service game. "A little bit lucky because he has two break points and important drop shot. I came back. That point was really important," Nadal said. "After that I think I played really well. In the important moments, I was focused all the time." But Nadal was unhappy how he served throughout the tournament, and plans to improve it in the weeks leading up to Roland Garros, where he begins his quest for a fifth

straight French Open title next month. "This tournament I didn't serve very well. Especially the second serve was sometimes 120 kph (74 mph). So that's (a) disaster," Nadal said. "Yeah, I have to play more. Have to serve better." It was the third-seeded Djokovic who crumbled as Nadal clinched victory on his first match point when the Serbian sent a backhand into the net. "I played a very good match, actually one of the best I have played against him on this surface," Djokovic said. "It's really unfortunate that in certain moments I didn't play the way I was supposed to play, with a



Rafael Nadal of Spain reacts after defeating Novak Djokovic of Serbia in the final match of the Monte Carlo Tennis Masters tournament in Monaco, Sunday, April 19, 2009.
Associated Press

little bit more patience." Nadal extended his winning streak at Monte Carlo to 27 and won his 21st straight victory on clay since losing to Juan Carlos Ferrero of Spain in the second round of the Rome Masters in May 2008. Nobody has matched Nadal's performance at the Monte

Carlo tournament since tennis turned professional in 1968. Reggie Doherty won the event six times overall between 1897-99 and 1902-04, while five-time winner Anthony Wilding of New Zealand won four times in a row from 1911-14 and got his other title in 1908.

NL Roundup

Ibanez's heroics leads Phillies over Padres 5-4

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Raul Ibanez hit a two-run homer in the ninth inning to give the Philadelphia Phillies a 5-4 victory over the San Diego Padres on Sunday.

Ryan Howard started Philadelphia's winning rally with a leadoff single against Edwin Moreno (0-1), who was in because closer Heath Bell had worked three consecutive days. Ibanez followed by hitting a 2-0 pitch into the right-field stands.

Slumping shortstop Jimmy Rollins connected for a pinch-hit solo drive in the eighth for Philadelphia, which ended a three-game skid.

Clay Condrey (2-0) picked up the win working one inning in relief.

Giants 2, Diamondbacks 0

At San Francisco, Randy Johnson took a no-hitter into the seventh inning against his former team, leading the Giants to the win.

Johnson, who allowed one hit in seven innings, was perfect through four. He faced the minimum through six and stranded Augie Ojeda at third after the shortstop doubled to open the seventh.

The 45-year-old Johnson (1-2) got his 296th career win in his first start against the Diamondbacks, who he spent eight seasons with. Bob Howry pitched the eighth and Brian Wilson got the last three outs for his second save.

Max Scherzer (0-1) struck out six in five innings for Arizona, yielding one run and three hits with four walks.

Dodgers 14, Rockies 2

At Los Angeles, Matt Kemp hit a grand slam and a solo homer to help the Dodgers pick up their eighth straight win.

Andre Ethier and Orlando Hudson each drove in three runs for Los Angeles, which has won its first six home games for the first time since the 1947 Brooklyn Dodgers started out 8-0 at Ebbets Field in Jackie Robinson's rookie year.

Scott Elbert (1-0) allowed two runs and three hits in 2 2-3 innings for Los Angeles, including seventh-inning homers by Brad Hawpe and Chris Iannetta.

Ubaldo Jimenez (1-2) was tagged for seven runs and seven hits in 4 1-3 innings for Colorado.

Nationals 7, Marlins 4

At Washington, Cody Ross hit the tying homer in the eighth inning, then hit a three-run double in the ninth to give the Marlins their seventh straight victory.

Emilio Bonifacio led off the ninth by drawing a walk off Saul Rivera (0-3), and John Baker followed with a double into the gap in left-

center to tie the game at 4. After Hanley Ramirez struck out, Ross Gload was walked intentionally before Dan Uggla struck out looking and Jeremy Hermida walked on a 3-2 pitch to load the bases for Ross.

Leo Nunez (2-0) worked the eighth and Matt Lindstrom pitched the ninth for his third save.

Reds 4, Astros 2

At Houston, pitcher Micah Owings hit a pinch-hit, two-run double to lead the Reds.

Owings, who won the 2007 NL Silver Slugger award for pitchers, is 2-for-3 as a pinch hitter this season. Geoff Geary (0-1) set up the tiebreaking hit with a throwing error that allowed Jerry Hairston Jr. to score before Owings came to the plate.

Edinson Volquez (2-1) struck out seven in six innings for Cincinnati, yielding one run and four hits with five walks. Francisco Cordero pitched the ninth for his fourth save in four tries.

Braves 11, Pirates 1

At Pittsburgh, Martin Prado and David Ross hit three-run homers to support Javier Vazquez's six shutout innings, and the Braves snapped a five-game losing streak.

The Braves hadn't scored in 22 innings and the Pirates hadn't allowed a run in 21 innings, a pair of streaks that ended when Jeff Francoeur's two-run single keyed a three-run first inning against Zach Duke (2-1).

Vazquez (1-1) permitted 10 earned runs in 12 innings over two starts against the Pirates the previous two seasons, but he didn't need all the offense he received Sunday.

He struck out eight, gave up five hits and walked one. He has 20 strikeouts in 12 innings over his last two starts, 12 during a 5-1 loss to Florida on Tuesday.

Brewers 4, Mets 2

At New York, Mike Cameron homered against his former team and Todd Coffey escaped a pair of late jams during an eight-out save, helping the Brewers avoid the sweep.

Jeff Suppan (1-2) bounced back from two poor starts to begin the season, pitching into the seventh inning. Milwaukee improved to 28-51 against the Mets since moving to the NL in 1998.

The Mets went 2-for-13 with runners in scoring position and wasted a credible spot start by Nelson Figueroa (0-1), called up to pitch in place Mike Pelfrey (forearm tendinitis).

Coffey, who hasn't allowed a run since joining the Brewers last September, earned his first save since 2006 with Cincinnati.



Philadelphia Phillies' Raul Ibanez hits a two-run home run against the San Diego Padres in the ninth inning of a baseball game Sunday, April 19., 2009, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press



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Yankees benefit from first video review of year

NEW YORK (AP) — Umpires used the first video review of the season to rule that pinch-hitter Jorge Posada's drive to right field was a home run in the Yankees' 7-3 win over the Cleveland Indians on Sunday.

Posada was batting for Jose Molina when he sent a fly to right off Jensen Lewis with one out in the seventh inning. Trevor Crowe leaped at the wall, but the ball was deflected by a fan and bounced off the top and then off Crowe's glove before falling into play.

"I was hoping the ball would carry the way it's been carrying," said Posada, who ended up with the 20th homer in the first four games at the new Yankee Stadium. "I didn't think it was gone, though."

The game was delayed more than eight minutes overall. The play was similar to Derek Jeter's home run against Baltimore in the 1996 playoffs, when young fan Jeffrey Maier reached over the wall in nearly the same spot at the old Yankee Stadium to catch a drive above Orioles right-fielder Tony Tarasco. Video replay wasn't available in '96 — it's in its first full season of use by Major League Baseball after getting a trial run late last season.

Posada hesitated near first base because he couldn't see the ball until it hit the warning track, then kept running. He didn't know it was a home run until he was past second base and approaching Cody Ransom, who had held up at third. That's when Posada saw third base umpire Mike Estabrook signal home run, giving the Yankees a 4-3 lead.

Crowe ran toward the infield indicating a fan had interfered, and Indians manager Eric Wedge came out to dispute the call. "I didn't take into account that I'd have to get above the fan to get the ball," Crowe said. "I watched the replay and it looked like his glove was outstretched on top of mine. It all happened so fast."

The umpires convened near the mound before going to the video room through the visitors' dugout. They returned and summoned both managers. Girardi was called for first, causing the crowd of 43,068 to boo after celebrating minutes earlier. "When he came out with his explanation, as soon as he started I felt pretty good," said Girardi, who acknowledged a moment of nervousness.

"I thought it was a home run, I did," Girardi said. "I know it was very close and a lot of times you could be wrong with the naked eye. I actually thought it was a home run."

While the umpires discussed it on the field, Girardi ran the few steps into the video room just off the dugout — a perk of the new stadium — to give it his own review.

"I had looked at it, and looked at it and looked at it, and had other guys look at it," Girardi said. "And we all came up with the same answer, so we figured it wouldn't be overturned."

Wedge saw things differently, but didn't protest much after the umpires gave their ruling.

"I thought it never got on top of the wall where the fan was. My argument was the fan and the glove came together, but the replay, they said it was beyond the fence," Wedge said.

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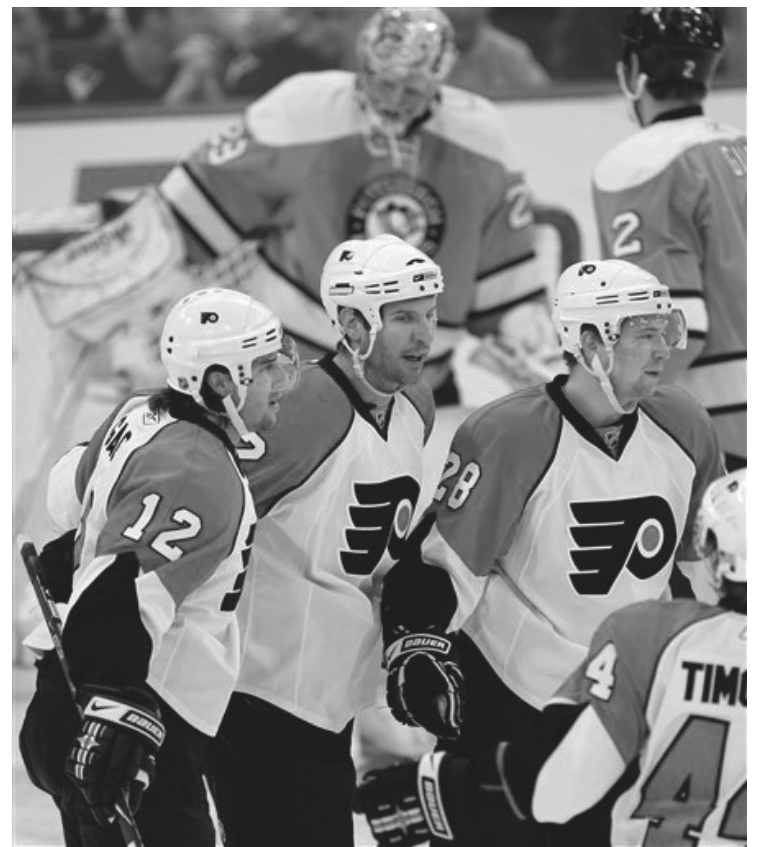
NHL Playoffs

Flyers beat Penguins

The Associated Press
PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Jeff Carter and Mike Richards scored their first goals of the series early for a fast start, and Claude Giroux and Simon Gagne put the Philadelphia Flyers ahead for good in a 6-3 victory over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Sunday. Pittsburgh leads the series 2-1. Game 4 is Tuesday night in Philadelphia. Carter, the NHL's scored-leading goal scorer, scored his first of the postseason 3 minutes into the game, and Richards made it two goals on two shots 2:15 later. Giroux gave the Flyers a 3-2 lead at 4:32 of the second, and Gagne increased the lead to two with a short-handed goal at 8:58. Jared Ross scored his first NHL goal in

the third to make it 5-2, and Gagne added an empty-netter with 1:36 left. Evgeni Malkin scored twice, and Rob Scuderi added a goal for Pittsburgh. Devils 3, Hurricanes 2
At Raleigh, North Carolina, Travis Zajac scored at 4:58 of overtime as the New Jersey Devils beat the Carolina Hurricanes and took a 2-1 lead in the Eastern Conference playoff series. Zach Parise scored for the third straight game and assisted on Zajac's winner, helping the Devils bounce back from an overtime loss two nights earlier on home ice. Game 4 is Tuesday night in Raleigh. Parise started the decisive sequence by attempting to throw the puck toward Brian

Rolston, but it clicked off Anton Babchuk's skate and to Zajac in the slot. Cam Ward stopped his wrist shot with his pads, but Zajac followed it by flipping it high past the Carolina goalie for his second career playoff goal. Brian Gionta added a goal, Zajac assisted on Parise's goal, and Martin Brodeur stopped 28 shots for New Jersey. Ryan Bayda and Chad LaRose scored their first career playoff goals, and Ward finished with 32 saves for Carolina. Canucks 3, Blues 2
At St. Louis, Steve Bernier broke a tie in the opening minute of the third period with Vancouver's third power-play goal of the game. Mattias Ohlund and Daniel



Philadelphia Flyers' Simon Gagne (12) is congratulated by teammates Mike Knuble, center, and Claude Giroux (28) after scoring a first-period goal against Pittsburgh Penguins goalie Marc-Andre Fleury, upper left, in an NHL hockey game in Pittsburgh Sunday, March 22, 2009. Associated Press

Sedin also scored power-play goals, and Roberto Luongo made 24 saves to help the Canucks take a 3-0 series lead.

David Backes and Andy McDonald scored for St. Louis. Game 4 is Tuesday night in St. Louis.



Philadelphia 76ers forward Andre Iguodala celebrates after making the winning shot during the final seconds of Game 1 of a first-round NBA playoff basketball game against the Orlando Magic in Orlando, Fla., Sunday, April 19, 2009. Philadelphia won 100-98. Associated Press

The Associated Press
ORLANDO, Florida (AP) — Andre Iguodala made a 22-

foot jumper with 2.2 seconds remaining as the 76ers rallied from an 18-point deficit to

beat Orlando 100-98 in Game 1 of their opening-round playoff series Sunday. Iguodala had 20 points, eight rebounds and eight assists, and Louis Williams scored 18 to help the 76ers beat the Magic for the first time in four tries this season — and when it mattered most. Hedo Turkoglu's fadeaway 3-pointer missed at the buzzer, and Magic fans stood in disbelief before filing out quietly.

Dwight Howard had a career playoff-high 31 points and 16 rebounds, and rookie Courtney Lee scored 18 for the Magic. Game 2 in the best-

of-seven series is Wednesday night in Orlando.

Lakers 113, Jazz 100

At Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 24 points, Trevor Ariza added 21 and Pau Gasol 20 as Los Angeles defeated Utah. Allowing a Phil Jackson-coached team to win Game 1 of any series doesn't bode well for the opposition. Jackson's teams have never lost a playoff series after winning Game 1, going 41-for-41 with Chicago and the Lakers. The Lakers led by 22 points at halftime and then answered resoundingly both times Utah got within nine in the second

half. Bryant's total gave him 3,710 career postseason points, moving him past Magic Johnson and into ninth on the NBA's list. He trails only Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (4,070) and Jerry West (4,457) for most points in the playoffs with the Lakers. Carlos Boozer led the Jazz with 27 points and Deron Williams added 16 points and a career playoff-high 17 assists. Both were in foul trouble, with Boozer getting his third just before halftime when Williams already had two. Game 2 is Tuesday night.



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Verizon

Continued from
page 16

Gay struck his approach to 10 feet on No. 1 for a birdie to increase the lead to four. A hole later, he rolled in a curling, uphill 57-footer for an eagle-3, raising his putter as the ball disappeared into the cup.

Playing partner Wilkinson, facing a 10-footer for birdie, never had a chance with the cheers for Gay still in his ears



and the margin increased to six shots.

A birdie on the par-5 fifth gave Gay a seven-shot edge that no one could dent.

Gay moved into the lead Friday with a run of five straight birdies and continued his precise, accurate play throughout. He made only two bogeys — one Friday and one Sunday — and bettered Roberts' low of three bogeys for the 1996 tournament.

The tour began keeping hole-by-hole scoring records in 1983.

"I'm happy for the guy. He's playing phenomenal," Baird said.

The only back-nine drama was if Gay could break Roberts' scoring mark. It looked dicey when Gay posted a bogey on the 12th hole to fall back to 17-under.

Surely, with a large lead and

victory all but wrapped up, Gay would pull back a bit the rest of the way.

Not this time.

Gay regained the lost stroke with a birdie on the next hole, then matched Roberts with a birdie on the par-5 15th.

A hole later on No. 16, Gay rolled in a 15-footer to reach 20 under.

On the final hole, Gay finally asked caddie Kip Henley who was in second and how far ahead were they. "He told me he didn't know," Gay smiled. There'll be no hiding Gay's victory this time.



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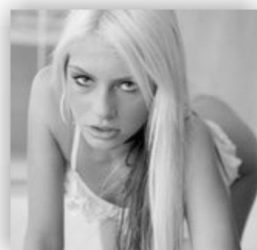
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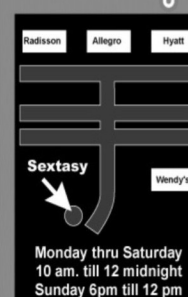


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Lula pide fin de embargo a Cuba y crédito para A.Latina

PUERTO ESPAÑA (Reuters) - El presidente de Brasil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, dijo el sábado que el continente americano fracasará en sus intentos de integración mientras Cuba siga bloqueada, lo que eleva la presión sobre Estados

Unidos para que ponga fin al embargo comercial sobre la isla. El mandatario, un líder de izquierda moderada que proyectó mundialmente la imagen de Brasil como un impulsor de consensos, indicó además que América Latina está sufriendo por

la crisis internacional, que afecta las exportaciones de la región y restringe su recepción de crédito, inversiones y remesas. El esfuerzo de América por unirse "será siempre incompleto mientras persista en nuestras reuniones la

anómala exclusión de uno de los países del continente", dijo Lula.

LaisladeGobiernocomunista no participa de la OEA ni de los foros que organiza debido a su exclusión del sistema interamericano hace casi medio siglo, cuando Estados Unidos le impuso un embargo que el actual presidente, Barack Obama, comenzó lentamente a flexibilizar.

Antes de llegar a Puerto España, Obama ofreció reiniciar la relación con Cuba tras levantar las restricciones a los viajes familiares de cubano-estadounidenses a la isla y liberar el envío de remesas.

"Las medidas tomadas hasta ahora por el presidente Obama van en buena dirección, pero son insuficientes. Es importante que sean ampliadas y vengan sin precondiciones", agregó el mandatario brasileño.

"El diálogo directo entre los dos gobiernos puede abrir el camino para superar esta situación con la que las

Américas no quieren convivir más", dijo Lula.

El fin del embargo estadounidense a Cuba fue unánimemente reclamado por los mandatarios latinoamericanos en la V Cumbre de las Américas que se desarrolla en Trinidad y Tobago.

Para enfrentar la delicada coyuntura económica global, que amenaza los avances logrados por Latinoamérica en los últimos años para combatir la pobreza y la exclusión, Lula pidió "aumentar los recursos del FMI y el Banco Mundial para ayudar, sin condiciones, a países pobres y en desarrollo".

Al hablar ante 33 presidentes americanos en la capital de Trinidad y Tobago, Puerto España, Lula reclamó restaurar el financiamiento a las economías en desarrollo y resaltó la importancia de aumentar el capital del Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, el mayor prestamista de Latinoamérica.

Chávez anuncia embajador para EEUU

PUERTO ESPAÑA (AP) - El presidente Hugo Chávez declaró el sábado que el ex canciller Roy Chaderton será propuesto como nuevo embajador de Venezuela ante la Casa Blanca en busca de iniciar una "nueva era" en las relaciones de los dos países, que no tienen embajadores desde hace siete meses.

No hubo una reacción inmediata de la delegación estadounidense.

La decisión de Chávez fue anunciada en la V Cumbre de las Américas, donde el gobernante venezolano había interactuado en varias ocasiones con el presidente Barack Obama, a quien en un primer encuentro le dijo incluso "quiero ser tu amigo". El embajador venezolano Bernardo Alvarez salió de Washington en septiembre a petición del gobierno del entonces presidente George W. Bush, en represalia por la decisión de Chávez de expulsar de Caracas al embajador estadounidense Patrick Duddy. Chávez había dispuesto la expulsión de Duddy en solidaridad a su vez con una acción similar del presidente boliviano Evo Morales, quien alegó intervención en los asuntos internos del país para expulsar al embajador Philip Goldberg.

El presidente venezolano, quien también dio a Obama el libro "Las Ventas abiertas de América Latina", del uruguayo Eduardo Galeano, dijo a reporteros que dio instrucciones al canciller Nicolás Maduro para que iniciara todo el procedimiento que convierta a Chaderton, actual embajador ante la


OEA, en nuevo embajador en la Casa Blanca.

"Es mi candidato", dijo. "Hay que esperar que Estados Unidos le dé la aceptación correspondiente".


El viernes, en su intervención en la apertura de la cumbre, Obama ofreció una "asociación en igualdad de condiciones" a América Latina y el Caribe y dijo que Estados Unidos deseaba "un nuevo comienzo" con Cuba, cuyo retorno a la integración regional se convirtió inesperadamente en el tema dominante de la cumbre.

Chávez, amigo de los líderes cubanos Fidel y Raúl Castro, elogió en varias ocasiones el discurso de Obama en la cumbre. Luego de una reunión con Obama de los presidentes de la Unión de Naciones Suramericanas, UNASUR, Chávez dijo que "es posible" que el mensaje del estadounidense lo llevara a considerar el restablecimiento de relaciones a nivel de embajador.

Los dos países nunca rompieron relaciones diplomáticas pese a las salidas de sus respectivos embajadores.



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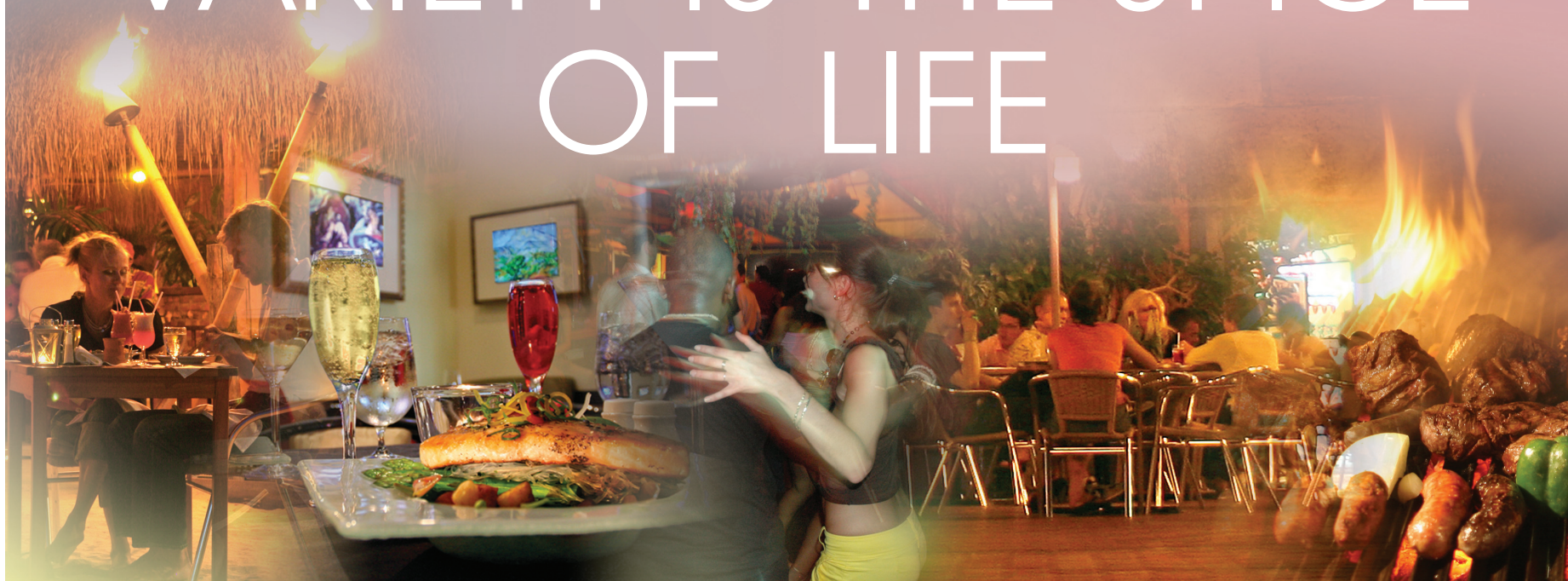
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